Hot Spring

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A Journal of Commitment

"Sri Lanka will never be put together again"

"Let not the world connive with genocide of Tamils"

Adrian Wijemanne on "The meaning of Peace in Sri Lanka"

THE

TAMIL

STRUGGLE

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD 1977

.... It is always the oppressor, not the oppressed, who dictates the form of the struggle. If the oppressor uses violence, the oppressed have no alternative but to respond violently. In our case it was simply a legitimate form of self-defence. I ventured that if the state decided to use peaceful methods', the ANC would also use peaceful means. "It is up to you", I said, "not us, to renounce violence"

Nelson Mandela, explaining the rationale of the armed struggle waged by the African National Congress, in his autobiography, LONG WALK TO FREEDOM.

This space was donated by an advertiser who wishes to remain anonymous.

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Editorial Comment

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD - 1977

The year 1977 was a watershed in the political history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka: and in the history of the country as well. It was the year when at a democratically held elections, the Tamil voters in the northeast gave their leaders of that time a clear, affirmative mandate for the establishment of "a separate independent, sovereign state for the Tamil people". Those who prattle about DEMOCRACY today, both within the country and outside, should try in all good faith not to sweep that fact under the carpet.

That year also saw the second major anti-Tamil riots, inspired by the machinery of the Sinhala state, and obviously meant as a punishment for the Tamil voter for daring to ask for "separation" That was also the year which saw, earlier on, the untimely passing away of the Father of Tamil Nationalism - S.J.V.Chelvanayakam. Curiously enough, it was the year when the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) found itself propelled into the position of the second largest party in the Sri Lankan Parliament with 18 seats, pushing the alternate party of government, the SLFP, headed by Mrs.Bandaranaike into third place with its paltry eight seats. That was an electoral quirk that was never anticipated by either the Sinhala or the Tamil people.

Quick to make profit of what was an electoral "accident", Jayewardene baited TULF leader Amirthalingam with the office of Leader of Opposition. The lure of office was too much to resist and the man who headed the electoral campaign for a separate state gratefully sat on the chair of the Leader of Opposition, conveniently forgetting the mandate which the Tamil people had given him. There was no constitutional compulsion on him to accept that post. In the tradition of Whitehall, he had no earthly chance of becoming a Prime Minister in waiting at any time in the future, a fact not unknown to him. Indeed, had Chelvanayakam lived he would never have succumbed to that kind of political immorality and abuse of the people's trust. That one act of Amirthalingam put the political clock back for the Tamils. Today, twenty long years after a long-suffering Tamil people had given a loud democratic voice to their demand, there are enough jokers and Rip Van Winkles in the Sinhala south who keep asking : What grievances do the Tamil people have ?! This is not political amnesia, which is forgivable. This is derision directed at a whole nation of people.

When Chelvanayakam launched the "Ilankai Thamil Arasu Kadchi" nearly 50 years ago - in 1949 - (loosely referred to in English as the Federal Party), he struck the first organised blow for Tamil Nationalism. The party's goal, as spelt out at the inaugural meeting held in December that year, was "to work unceasingly for the achievement of a Tamil state within the federal framework of a united Ceylon, as the only way to ensure that the Tamil-speaking people in Ceylon could live with honour and self-respect".

It took two elections (1952 and 1956), seven more years, and a direct threat to Tamil language rights before the Tamils themselves rallied behind Chelvanayakam's leadership. As for the Sinhalese, they set their face totally against any talk of Federalism.Let alone Federalism, any concession to Tamil wellbeing was anathema to them, steeped as they were in the mythical Mahavamsa mind-set that told them that the island was a

(continued on page 3)

What They Say

“Having women on top has not helped further the cause of women. It doesn’t mean anything. They dont represent women, they represent political dynasties”.

- Sri Lankan women’s rights activist Sunila Abesekera, quoted in THE ISLAND, March 22.

* * * * *

“Since the passing of the Vaddukoddai resolution, tell me which Tamil party took an effective step towards solving the problem as the LTTE did ? The only party which has made the government negotiate on the Tamil issue is the LTTE, not other parties.

-Livestock Development and Estate Infrastructure Minister S.Thondaman, in an interview with SUNDAY LEADER, March 22.

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“LTTE is fighting every inch. The losses are very high.. I don’t think the Sri Lanka army has taken such losses in any other one single operation. The army had been bogged down for nearly an year. One year is very long in modern warfare”.

- Opposition leader Ranil Wickremasinghe, quoted in Reuter report, published in THE ASIAN AGE, March 27.

* * * * *

“Gamini (Navaratne) had been writing a weekly political column to the SATURDAY REVIEW, a Jaffna-based English weekly published by a group of Colombo Tamils and edited by S.Sivanayagam, an old TIMES colleague and one of the most underrated English writers among journalists in Sri Lanka”.

-SUNDAY OBSERVER editor Ajith Samaranayake in in an obituary tribute to Gamini Navaratne, SUNDAY OBSERVER, March 22.

* * * * *

“We believe there is a conspiracy by certain police officers to tarnish the image of the government and the President by resorting to acts of intimidation and harassment”.

-Media Minister Mangala Samaraweera, reported by agencies, March 5

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“Like a sane man who cannot chop his hands off and then try to lead a normal life, a sovereign nation cannot allow the country to be dismembered. But if there is enough indication that by talking to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam it will bring peace, we are willing to give it a try”.

-National Integration Minister Lakshman Peiris speaking to the Foreign Correspondents’

* * * * *

International

“What is happening in Sri Lanka is a civil war and India should not have got involved. We should now make all efforts to bring back peace in Sri Lanka as is possible. We should also put all moral pressure to prevent human rights violations in this civil war. This is my personal opinion”

- Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes when asked for his views on the LTTE. (ASIAN AGE, 21-22 March)

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“In mathematics, one plus one may be two but in politics one plus one makes eleven”.

- Sushma Swaraj, Minister in BJP government.

* * * * *

“Europe and Russia - there is no bigger organism in the whole world. Everyone must know and remember that”.

- Russian President Yeltsin, in a pointed remark directed against America,after hosting the first annual troika meeting with President Chirac of France and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany.

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“The Vajpayee government must come out with its stand on the LTTE since it has Mr.Fernandes in the Cabinet”

-Janata Party president Subramanian Swamy.

* * * * *

“ I am opposed to using the army to tackle insurgency and internal disturbances”.

-Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes, addressing the first Press conference after assuming office.

* * * * *

“The greatest curse would befall this nation if Sonia Gandhi became Prime Minister.... Can an Indian ever become P.M.of Italy

- AIADMK supremo Jayalalitha

* * * * *

Buddhaappointed country for Sinhala Buddhists only ! Chelva on the other hand was a gentle Christian (leading a Hindu following), with a touching faith in human nature, and a tireless trier in the politics of persuasion. But his was a futile course. Pacts were torn up, agreements were violated, non-violent protests were put down with guns, and racist mobs felt free to lay their hands on Tamils with impunity - as they did on Chelvanayakam himself and 200 silent sit-in protesters opposite the Parliament building in 1956, while the discriminatory"Sinhala Only" bill was being debated inside.

Chelva memorial Jaffna

If the year 1956 saw the collective humiliation of the Tamil people, that was only the beginning. The perpetuation of that under Bandaranaike rule continues to this day, (with power passing from father to mother, and from mother to daughter)with increasing ferocity, until today it has reached genocidal proportions.

When in May 1972, faced with the threat of a new Republican constitution, three Tamil parties - the Federal Party, the Tamil Congress and the Ceylon Workers ' Congress, in a rare expression of solidarity, got together under the banner of the Tamil United Front (TUF), it seemed the Tamil worm, trod upon for too long, was beginning to turn. When the 1972 constitution swept away even the meagre safeguards for minorities provided in the Soulbury constitution, and brought in a Sinhala-Buddhist theocratic state, Chelva resigned his seat at Kankesanturai and dared the government to contest him on the right of selfdetermination of the Tamils. The call was ignored by Mrs.Bandaranaike and the seat remained vacant until 1975.

At the by-election that was ultimately called, the Federal Party leader called for a mandate for Tamil Eelam, and the voters gave him a crushing majority. He said in his victory speech: "I wish to announce to my Tamil people and to the country that I consider the verdict at this election as a mandate that the Tamil nation should exercise sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free...". Thus, the formal pledge for Tamil Eelam, came even one year before the Vaddukkoddai resolution.

Although the three Tamil parties got together under the TUF umbrella, it became clear that the unity was not founded on any concrete working programme. It was merely a knee-jerk reaction to the growing avalanche of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism. When the Federal Party, tired of agitating for a Federal constitution for twenty years only to be met with the Sinhala charge that it was a disguised cry for separatism, decided to opt for the real thing, the other two partners in the TUF alliance began to drift out of the alliance. Mr.Thondaman saw no virtue in subscribing to a demand for Tamil Eelam, which he thought will not solve the problems of the plantation Tamils. Neither did the Tamil Congress favour the idea, given its traditional campaign for equal rights for Tamils under a unitary constitution. So much so, when the Tamil United Liberation Front came into being in 1976, and passed a formal resolution for the setting up of a Tamil state, the words "United" and "Front" were virtual misnomers. In essence, it was the Federal Party that reconstituted itself as the TULF. Today, the word"Liberation" in the name of the party has ceased to have any meaning as well.

In March 1977, three months before the elections, Chelvanayakam fell ill and in April he died. It was a severe blow for the Tamil political struggle during a crucial phase. The rumblings of youth unrest during Mrs.Bandaranaike's oppressive regime from 1970 to 1977 had already manifested in the sensational murder of her main collaborator in Jaffna - Alfred Durayappa - on July 27, 1975. The Tamils needed a moral force to legitimise their just grievances, which only Chelvanayakam could have provided, at a time when Tamil youths were being hounded by the Jayewardene government for their acts of violenae. Amirthalingam who succeeded to the TULF leadership proved to be the wrong man at the wrong moment of Tamil history. Not that he did not have the right credentials. With his customary chest forward stance and the appellation "Thalapathy" (military commander), he had previously earned the trust of Tamil youths, including the young Prabhakaran. But he had been too long a tonguewagging politician to have the stomach to become a revolutionary,which was what the historical process demanded at that time.

The responsibility of carrying forward the 1977 mandate given by the Tamil people fell therefore on Prabhakaran,-Amirthalingam having shirked it. In that sense, Prabhakaran was truly Chelva's political heir. If that is not apparent to many , it is because of a visual distraction: Chelvanayakam did not carry a gun, as Prabhakaran does. But it has to be realised that the non-violent leader as well as the armed revolutionary were both by-products of an unrelenting historical process, and the crystallisation of a 40-year Tamil search for self-esteem and distinct identity. To Chelva, the search began in 1949, and to the LTTE leader in 1972."The Changing of the Guard" took place in 1977.

As much as Mahatma Gandhi and "Netaji" Subhas Chandra Bose fought for Indian freedom in their respective ways, so have Chelvanayakam and Prabhakaran chosen their own different paths, except that they represent two different generations, and two different chapters of the Tamil freedom movement.

S.Sivanayagam.

"SRI LANKA - THE COUNTRY WILL NEVER BE PUT TOGETHER AGAIN"

says LEE KUAN YEW

LEE KUAN YEW: THE MAN AND HIS IDEAS is the title of a book published recently in Singapore. Written by three STRAITS TIMES journalists Han Fook Kwang, Warren Fernandez and Sumiko Tan, the book carries fresh interviews with Lee Kuan Yew on the events that shaped his life and the way he governed Singapore.

Now in his graying years - he is 74 now - the founding father of Singapore is regarded as virtually a national institution at home. In transforming a busy ramshackle port city on a resourceless island into a prosperous multi-lingual nation, he created a model for other developing countries. He left the premiership in 1990 and assumed the role of senior minister, but wields as much prestige and influence today as he did while holding office, a distinction rarely earned by any politician in any other country.

In talking of Sri Lanka, this is what Lee Kuan Yew says: -

"We have got to live with the consequences of our actions and we are responsible for our own people and we take the right decisions for them.

"You look at the old Philippines. The old Ceylon. The old East Pakistan and several others. I have been to these countries and places. When I went to Colombo for the first time in 1956 it was a better city than Singapore because Singapore had three and a half years of Japanese occupation and Colombo was the centre or HQ of Mountbatten's Southeast Asia command. And they had sterling reserves. They had two Universities. Before the war, a thick layer of educated talent. So if you believe what American liberals or British liberals used to say, then it ought to have flourished. But it didn't. One-man one-vote led to the domination of the Sinhalese majority over the minority Tamils who were the active and intelligent fellows who worked hard and got themselves penalised. And English was out. They were educated in English. Sinhalese was in. They got quotas in two universities and now they have become fanatical Tigers. ***And the country will never be put together again.*** *Somebody should have told them - change the system, loosen up, or break off. And looking back, I think the Tunku was wise. (The reference is to Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malaysian Prime Minister under whose rule Singapore separated from Malaysia - Ed.HS). I offered a loosening up of the system. He said: "Clean cut, go your way". Had we stayed in, and I look at Colombo and Ceylon, I mean changing names,* ***sometimes maybe you deceive the gods,, but I dont think you are deceiving the people who live in them. It makes no great difference to the tragedy that is being enacted. They failed because they had weak or wrong leaders".***

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Emotion, Reason and the Tamil struggle

By Anton N.J. Selvadurai

The LTTE led by Prabhakaran, and created by the majoritarian tyranny of the Sinhala state, is the only organization that is now fighting for the freedom of the Tamil nation.

Now, this is a fact. All other Tamil parties have withdrawn from the armed struggle in favor of the LTTE, who have indeed proven their great ability. Their dedication and patriotism are unmatched by anyone anywhere.

There are some Tamils who oppose the LTTE, due to a variety of reasons.

a. Jealousy.

b. Anger - because the LTTE has made them feel inferior.

Patriotic and defense requirements have forced the LTTE to displease some who are more concerned about themselves and their material possessions, and care less about the implications and complications of a war situation.

c. Some wrong actions by certain cadres of the LTTE due to human frailty or heat of the battle. People sometimes tend to forget that the dedicated LTTE are also human.

There are many people who are unable to rationalize on this issue. There are many Tamils who are angry with the LTTE and have cause to do so, as I have pointed out. But these are all emotional reasons. EMOTION and REASON are two separate things. Whilst one can get emotionally angry with the LTTE for any wrongs done by them, one must use his or her reason, because this deals with the freedom of our Tamil nation and our future generations. In these matters one is expected to put nation before self or party.

When one rationalizes like this, it seems logical that all Tamils, whatever their views may be, must support the freedom struggle. There must be unity of action, if we are to save ourselves and walk free.

We have shown ourselves to be a highly productive great nation. These have also been the qualities that brought about our downfall, because it made the Sinhala nation envy our success. But we must strive to use these qualities to fight for our freedom, in unison, as one people.

"People sometimes tend to forget that the dedicated LTTE are also human"

The expatriate community can contribute in a great way, not by just throwing money, but by articulating our case to their governments and the international community, wherever they may be. South Africa was able to acquire its freedom because of the weight of the international pressure which made them feel like a pariah state. The world will have to be told in uncertain terms that -

a. Tamils are a nation with its own culture.

b. The Tamil nation has its own homeland and is a separate geographical entity.

c. As a nation Tamils have an inalienable right of self-determination.

d. The Tamil nation has given the mandate to its leaders to form a separate state because of the majoritarian tyranny of the successive governments of Sri Lanka since independence.

e. The Sri Lankan government is violating our human rights by using military force to prevent the Tamils from exercising their right to self determination.

For those who do not like the LTTE for whatever reason and do not want them to be in power after a settlement, then it would be for the Tamil people as a whole to decide that. Let us cross that bridge when we get there. But to arrive there we must win the freedom struggle and be a free nation to determine our future.

The Sinhalese are using this anti-LTTE feeling among some Tamils to genocidally eliminate our people by continual bombing and warfare in the guise of eliminating the "terrorists." Some Tamils seem to forget that these so-called 'terrorists' are our own Tamil people. I really wish that the collaborators amongst us would realize this and collaborate no more.

We must not let the Sinhala government destroy us in the guise of solving our problem. It is left to us Tamils to solve our problem and for this to happen we must first be free. I need hardly stress the need for the united support of all Tamils. It must be realized that if the LTTE is eliminated so will the Tamil nation.

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Caring for the internally displaced Tamils

Below is a letter sent by the Representaive of the Secretary General on internally displaced persons to Dr.Shiamala Suntharalingam of Merton Abbey, London.

The U.N.High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata herself made specific reference to the Sri Lankan situation in the course of a lecture in Manila, as was reported in the previous issue of HOT SPRING. She criticized the government for looking at the problem as an issue of national sovereignty.

In effect, what is happening is a vicious policy on the part of the Sri Lankan government to punish those Tamils who live in areas under the control of the Liberation Tigers.

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Dear Dr.Suntharalingam,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 February 1998 sharing your concern for the health situation of internally displaced persons in northern Sri Lanka as well as the recent article published in The Independent on this subject.

As you may know, I undertook a visit to study the situation of internal displacement in Sri Lanka in June 1993. Since that time, large-scale hostilities have resumed and resulted in a significant deterioration in the situation of the displaced. The article enclosed with your letter further attests to this fact.

In my report to the General Assembly this past autumn, I drew attention to reports that up to half of the internally displaced of Sri Lanka do not receive Government assistance and that even for those who do, medical supplies in particular often do not arrive in time or in specific quantities. In order to fill these gaps in the delivery of assistance and strengthen national efforts to address the plight of the displaced, I recommended greater involvement on the part of international humanitarian organizations. Information since received by my office, including that provided in your letter, further underscores the urgency of doing so. The need to address more effectively the serious situation of internal displacement in Sri Lanka, as well as in several other countries, will be reiterated in my report to the upcoming Commission on Human Rights, which I will gladly share with you once it becomes available.

Thank you again for providing me with the additional information on the serious heaith situation of the internally displaced in Sri Lanka for whom I share your deep concern.

Yours sincerely,

Francis M. Deng
Representative of the Secretary-General
on Internally displaced persons

U.S. paper questions U.S. stand on Terrorism

THE WASHINGTON POST commenting editorially on "The Constitution and Terrorism" in it's issue of March 27 1998 says:-

THE ANTITERRORISM and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, which was passed to strengthen federal law enforcement's hand against terrorists, contained numerous sections that offend basic civil liberties. From gutting habeas corpus rights to expanding the use of secret evidence in deportation proceedings, the law was a real setback for civil liberties and should not have been passed. Recently the Center for Constitutional Rights filed suit in California on behalf of a group of plaintiffs seeking to have key provisions of the law thrown out as nconstitutional.

Ironically, the provisions at issue in the suit are among the relatively few in the law that actually merit some public sympathy. The sections seek to restrict domestic fund-raising for foreign terrorists by making it a crime to offer "material support" to those foreign groups that the secretary of state designates as terrorist organizations. Previously the law banned only support for terrorist activity itself, meaning that Americans could aid foreign groups that engage in violence as long as they supported only their lawful activities. Many terrorist groups, after all, do various types of social service work in addition to blowing things up, but the money is fungible. Any dollar that a terrorist doesn't have to spend running a hospital is freed up for other, less savory conduct. The rather reasonable goal of the legislation was to prevent terrorists from raising money under the guise of these legal activities.

But the fact that the law has a legitimate policy objective behind it does not make it constitutional, and the new case highlights the potentially serious constitutional deficiencies of the fund-raising ban. The plaintiffs are several people and groups in this country who wish to provide support for the lawful activities of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Kurdistan Workers Party — both of which are on the State Department's list of designated terrorist groups. Courts have long held that association with organizations that use both legal and illegal means to achieve political goals is constitutionally protected as long as that support is not designed specifically to further the illegal ends.

While the Supreme Court has never held that this principle applies to foreign terrorist groups, a recent appeals court decision the government is currently asking the high court to review suggests that it does. **The new law is also harmed by its own inconsistency. It does not ban support for all groups that engage in terrorist activity as defined in federal law, only those the secretary of state deems at odds with American security or national interest — giving the government the power to pick and choose which violent causes Americans are allowed to support. So, while American citizens cannot raise money for Hamas or the Tamil Tigers, they still can raise money for the Irish Republican Army, which is not currently on the State Department's list.**

Is this government power a legitimate exercise of the executive branch's foreign policy responsibilities or an unconstitutional form of discrimination among groups of rough moral equivalence? **Were those Americans who opposed apartheid by supporting the African National Congress while the State Department considered the ANC a terrorist group engaging in First Amendment-protected activity?** And if they were, is there then no way the government can constitutionally prevent this country from serving as a fund-raising base for international terrorists? The current suit should provide the courts an excellent opportunity to offer guidance on these snarled questions.

Naga rebel leader creates history

Becomes first N-E man to speak at UN forum

Guwahati, March 24: Chairman of the banned Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, Isak Chishi Swu, created bistory this week by becoming the first rebel leader from the Northeast to deliver a speech at a United Nations forum in Geneva. Several such attempts by rebel leaders from the region to put forward their views at any UN forum had earlier been foiled by Indian diplomats on the ground that these rebels were engaged in secessionist campaigns,

Speaking at the 54th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights—Sub" Commission on Prevention of DIscrimination and on Protection of Minorities that began at Geneva on March 16, Mr Swu said that his organisation is in favour of a "peaceful political solution to the Indo-Naga pofitical problem." The NSCN leader, however said: "Our nationhood and our dght to selfdetermination is inalienable and nonnegotiable."

Mr Swu's speech at a UN body

assumes significance in view of the ongoing peace talks between his organisation, the NSCN (I-M), and the Indian government He said that his organisation has “at last responded to tbe repeated Indian overtures and both the parties have agreed to hold political talks” at the prime ministerial level.

“Let it be known that the Nagas do not demand anything from India. They are only defending their rights to self-existence. They believed in peaceful political solution since the start of the issue,” he said. The NSCN leader, however, guestioned India’s sincerity, referring to the elections in Nagaland which were held despite widespread opposition. Mr Swu said that the elections in Nagaland which were held against the wishes of the Naga people have “dangerously stood in tbe way to peace.”

Mr Swu in his speech put forward the known Naga rebel position that theirs was not a secessinoist movement but a fight to regain their lost independence. He said: “Nagaland’s independence is not an issue of separation or secession as is being propagated by India; for such a question arises only when there is, or has been a union. The Nagas never participated in the union of either India or Burma. Ours is a clear case of resistance against foreign rule.”

NSCN (I-M) leader R.H. Raising has meanwhile told journalists in Nagaland on Saturday that they were awaiting concrete initiatives from tbe new government in New Delhi.

United Nations
Commission on
Human Rights
Fifty-Fourth session
Agenda item 7

International Educational development Fund on

The need to address viable self-determination claims

As we show in the 1998 edition of our annual review of the world’s wars, viable self-determination claims are a substantial factor in 17 of today’s 34 major wars. Self-determination claims are also made in nearly half of the 20 near-wars. In his preface to our 1997 review, Lord Avebury cited former secretary-general Perez de Cuollar’s Agenda for Peace (1992) in which Mr.Perez de Cuellar stressed the need to identify at the “earliest possible stages” situation that could lead to war and to “engage in peacemaking aimed at resolving the issues that have led to the conflict” when a war is already at hand. Lord Avebury noted the “still no coherent framework of policies to deal with (these) matters.” A glaring failure of the international community to address the role of self-determination in so many wars may be part of the reason for the absence of a framework. And the failure to even address self-determination may be a result of an extreme current tendency to reduce self-determination to political whims of the member states rather than afford it its proper due as a forceful, viable legal and factual basis of so many of the wars.

In our view, it is foolhardy to attempt to stifle viable claims through a rigid, glaringly political stance. We applaud secretary-general Kofi Annan’s statement of 6 February 1998, “there is no formula which should be imposed” in addressing self-determination. **The reality of the wars in Sri Lanka, East Timor, the Israeli Occupied Territories (including Southern Lebanon), Turkey and the tinderbox situations in Chechnya, the Moluccas, Burma, Cyprus, and now Kosovo are already taking their toll.** Failure to address these in light of the viable claims of self-determination involved in each case will guarantee a failure to resolve them.

Yet it is even more foolhardy, if not totally inept to fail to address today self-determination claims that were made and accepted by the united Nations years ago but that become side tracked due to political manoeuvres. The situation in Kashmir is a prime example. **Beginning in 1949 the United Nations promised the people of Kashmir the right to determine their political future by means of a plebiscite under United Nations auspices. That plebiscite has not taken place, despite efforts by the United Nations in the early 1950s to ensure that it would.** Does any member of the Commission or indeed any one in this room seriously think that the people of Kashmir will forget the promises made by the United Nations and abandon their claim to self-determination merely because India has 700,000 troops occupying their territory in direct defiance of he United Nations Security Council?....

The importance of the role of racism in many situations will have to be addressed in order to reach dependable solutions. **For example, the racism inherent in the situation in Sri Lanka must be addressed as part of an over-all peace process. Some situations will require complete independence, others a confederation or other structure that provides sufficient guarantees for effected populations. Even in Sri Lanka, for example, if may be possible to obtain agreements between the Tamil people and the Sinhala government as has been suggested recently by LTTE leader Prabakaran. The agreement between Russia and Chechnya granting Chechnya autonomy and providing for final determination of political status by the end of the year 2000 may prove a useful model for Sri Lanka.**

THE MEANING OF PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Adrian Wijemanne

1. The word **peace** ccupies a prominent place in political and social discourse in Sri Lanka. The Sinhala people and their leaders, both political and religious, use the word freely. So do the Tamil and Muslim peoples and their respective political and religious leaders. For the Sinhala people the word has a very specific meaning - it means **peace within a single all - island state.** There was **peace** of this type during British colonial rule, at least from 1815 to 1948 when colonial rule ended. These 133 years were followed by 35 years of such **peace** from 1948 to 1983 when war broke out. The habit of 168 years has embedded in the Sinhala consciousness the concept of **peace** being inseparable from **The single all - island state.** The two go together and stand or fall together. There is no concept or consciousness in the Sinhala mind of **peace** as an independent value unattached to any other attribute, let alone a value that in itself transcends all others.

2. As a result of this nexus, **peace** has become dependent on the restoration or the maintenance (depending on one's point of view) of **The single all - island state.** which itself is dependent on the victorious conclusion of the present war by the extermination of the LTTE or by their defeat to the point of surrender. This is the logic of the President's oft-repeated pronouncement that the war is a "War for Peace". The primary objective of the war is the restoration of **The single all - island state.** on the attainment of which **peace** will follow. So, **peace** is a corollary or adjunct to a greater and overriding value , namely, The single all - island state. In order to secure it peace will be sacrificed by resorting to war. The supreme value is not **peace**. The supreme value is **The single all - island state**. Not a single Sinhala voice has been heard to say it would have peace without **The single all - island state.**

3. **Peace**, by itself, is a moral value universally accepted by mankind. That acceptance flows from the sanctity attributed to human life and to the need to preserve human life. However, from time to time in human history, peoples have been misled into believing that there are other values superior to human life, for the securing of which human life may legitimately be sacrificed. Invariably such concepts have led to war. Quite apart from the resultant evil of war , such a concept is fundamentally and egregiously immoral. It is repugnant to the spiritual ethic of every known religion - it is equally repugnant to the humanistic ethic of those who have no religion. So, when we pay with human life for some material objective we are paying with the sacred for the profane - a grievous error from which we must redeem ourselves.

4. There are, however, just wars. These are wars waged to preserve human life when it is under attack and in danger of destruction. Thus an invading army must be fought even at the sacrifice of some lives in order to save other lives from subjugation and destruction. The case of Sri Lanka is a perfect illustration of this.

5. The Tamil people residing in the north-east of the island decided , by an overwhelming vote through the normal political and electoral process, to establish an independent state where they lived and to rule themselves therein. Inevitably this would result in **The single all - island state** being divided into two states. The response of the Sinhala people and of all their political parties and leaders was the waging of war to prevent the Tamil determination from being translated into reality. For the maintenance or restoration of **The single all - island state** the Sinhala people and all their leaders, both political and religious, believe it is legitimate to sacrifice the lives of their own troops and take the lives of Tamil troops who defend their homeland and the state they wish to establish. They believe, further, that their objective legitimises the exposure of civilian populations on both sides to injury and death and the destruction of their property when caught in the crossfire of war. The Sinhala people have subordinated the sanctity of human life to a secular, material objective which is the preservation of The single all - island state. That decision is fundamentally and unreservedly immoral.

6. It is necessary now to inquire whether the Tamil people of the north-east too have fallen into the selfsame error of paying with human life for the establishment of a state of their own where they live. The decision to establish a state of their own where they live and to rule themselves therein is a decision of civilian life and not a declaration of war on anybody nor a call to arms. It is when the Sinhala state refused to allow them to do what they had decided to do and backed it up with invasive military force that they were compelled to take up arms in their own defence. The Sri Lankan army now has over 200 military camps in the north-east of the island which is the area where the Tamil people live. The guerilla war being waged by the Tamil people is to expel this invading force. The Tamil resort to arms is consonant with the defensive requirements of a just war and is, therefore, moral.

7. The eolving norms and practices concerning such situations in the present world show how anachronistic the Sinhala position is. All four guerilla wars of national secession from individual states that have ended in this century (in the U.K., Pakistan, Cyprus and Ethiopia) have ended by separation i.e. the division of the mother state into two. Similar wars in Palestine and

Bosnia-Herzegovina which are nearing settlement now are also heading for the two-state solution. *In Chechnya the Russian attempt at military subjugation has been abandoned. All Russian troops have been withdrawn leaving the Chechen guerilla force in possession of their homeland which is now governed by an elected president, Aslan Mashkhadov, who commanded the Chechen forces right through the war to its end. Russia has assured the international community that by 2001 the future status of Chechnya will be settled by negotiation* ***without recourse to force.*** *The independence of Chechnya, a country smaller than the north-east province of Sri Lanka (6,250 sq.miles as against the 7,300 sq. miles of the north-east province) is thus only a matter of time.* In Northern Ireland the current peace negotiations have studiously avoided the attempt to secure the disarmament of the IRA in advance of other armed parties in this conflict. It is equally clear that the IRA cannot be extinguished militarily after nearly 30 years of trying. In all the cases mentioned in this paragraph **peace** has had to be, and will have to be, secured between armed parties who will continue in possession of their arms for the foreseeable future. Constitutional tinkering is powerless to alter this reality. The evolving norms and practices of international life in the present day and age exclude attempts at military extermination of those seeking self-rule in their territory of domicile and who have had to resort to armed struggle for the purpose. The international community strives to work out solutions accommodating the existence of armed parties. The commonest way out is the two-state solution along with the negotiation of agreements for the establishment of good-neighbourly relationships for the future between the separating states.

8. These norms and practices are underpinned by the experience of repeated failures, even by strong industrialised states such as the U.K., to exterminate militarily or weaken to the extent of surrender or compromise nationalist ,secessionist, guerillas fighting on their home ground against the conventional army of the state.

9. The position of the Sinhala people and their leaders and their government in the present war is morally reprehensible, anachronistic in the light of evolving international norms and practices in such cases and physically unattainable. It can only be explained as a combination of folly and perversity which will result in the degradation and pauperizing of the Sinhala nation in addition to burdening it with criminal culpability for the death and destruction wrought upon the Tamil people of the north-east province. There is no rational alternative to the separation of **peace** from "The single all - island state" and to working to attain the former for its own sake. A complete reversal of the present policy of war and the seeking of **peace** by adopting a two-state solution on the island are the only means by which the salvation , both moral and material, of the Sinhala people can be secured.

(The full text of the message sent by the writer to the New Delhi Convention for Solidarity with the Eelam Tamils of Sri Lanka, convened by George Fernandes and held on 14 December '97)

Ghost candidates resign

Officials at the Elections Commissioner's office in Jaffna said that so far 28 persons elected in January to the 17 local government bodies in the peninsula have resigned from their posts.

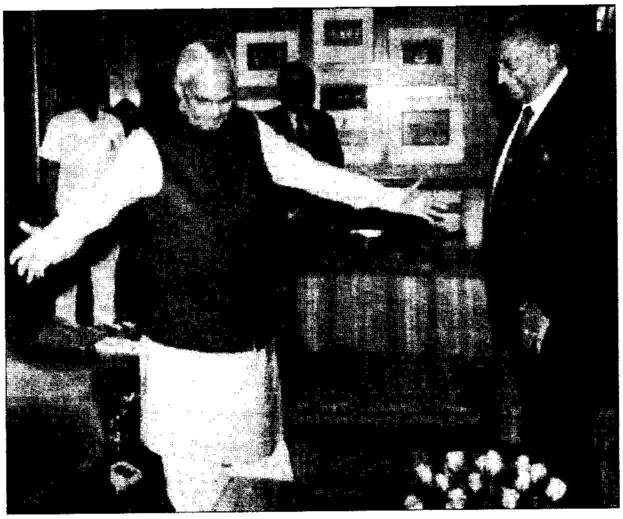
Of these, nine are from the Jaffna Municipal council they said. The main reason behind the resignations is that the majority of the candidates who were fielded by the Tamil parties to contest the Jaffna local government elections exist only in paper.

Hard pressed to find people who were ready to come forward to contest elections, all the parties filled up their nomination papers with non-existent candidates.

The bona fides of the lists were accepted as they had been endorsed by lawyers and justices of peace.

(Tamil Net)

Come in, but keep your arm off my shoulder!



What made Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee spread his arms wide like that ? Simple. He wanted to avoid upstartish Sri Lankan Foreign Minister placing his arm patronisingly over his shoulder - a typical habit of the latter whenever he meets his superiors. It was okay taking liberties with Gujral's shoulder; he with his good neighbourhood doctrine would have permitted anything, but Vajpayee, surely.?

Correspondence

TAKING SIDES

Between the oppressor & the oppressed

Having just read the CIIR (Catholic Institute for International Relations) pamphlet on 'Taking Sides', I was forced to write a lengthy letter to the CIIR director, Dr Ian Linden about the conflict in Tamil Eelam-Sri Lanka. It surprises me that an organisation such as CIIR that has produced a thoughtful booklet of this kind has not already taken a stand on our issue, though it has taken stands on conflicts in many other countries. ***Taking Sides*** **is a short, but outstanding work which exposes the nature of conflict as having an oppressed and an oppressor, rather than two equal parties. It argues that 'reconciliation' is not the correct approach to this state of affairs, as it would be akin to reconciling good and evil, and it would be effectively siding with the oppressor by denying the existence of oppression in the conflict.** *The author of the book, Albert Nolan, argues that it is necessary for any fair minded person who believes in the path of justice to take the side of the oppressed against the oppressor.*

Kothai Writes:-

Below is the content of the letter I sent to Ian Linden, and the address of CIIR should anyone want to pursue a discussion with CIIR and other like minded organisations or even politicians:

Dr Ian Linden
Catholic Institute for International Relations
22 Coleman Fields
London N1 7AF

Dear Ian Linden

I have just read the CIIR pamphlet on 'Taking Sides' which was passed to me by a Liberation Theologist friend of mine, after she read an article I wrote exposing similar concepts. I was very impressed with what I read. That there exists a Christian organisation that takes such a remarkably insightful, honest and courageous stand on the issue of conflict, is something quite eye-opening to me.

There cannot be "reconciliation" between good and evil

This brings me to wonder why CIIR has not, to my knowledge, published anything on the conflict in Sri Lanka. Is it because there are not many Catholics in the island's population and CIIR concerns itself with largely Catholic countries, or is it because the Catholics from the island have not approached CIIR, or is it because CIIR doesn't have the true information to be able to write on the subject? On asking these questions my friend responded that she doesn't believe that CIIR would limit its research to countries where the number of Catholics is high. So I venture to guess that CIIR doesn't have the correct information to achieve clarity of thought on the people's lives.

This should not surprise many of us. I am aware of the torrent of published material which seeks to confuse and distract the readers' attention from the truth, in what Albert Nolan describes as attempts to impose the 'middle way'. There are also many, many 'pseudo-reconciliation' organisations, 'human rights' organisations, 'welfare' organisations, etc. which have been set up with the guiding interests of regional and international imperialism. **The island is a key focal point of the world powers because of its geographical position, if you have control over Sri Lanka you can control the entire Indian Ocean. In fact though I say there is a torrent of published material, there is actually a dearth of material for a conflict of its size and nature, mainly because of this fierce interest of the world powers and their desire to keep their involvement in the island out of the spotlight of the public eye.** I would like to begin a discussion with you about the true issues about the conflict, from the side of the oppressed people, the Tamils who want freedom. I, myself am a Tamil woman, and I support those who are fighting for the freedom of my people. I would like to present the basis of today's conflict as simply as possible:

Mahavamsa myths

The island's indigenous inhabitants are the Tamils. The Sinhalese date their own arrival on the island at about 5BC, according to their religious text, the Mahavamsa. In the Mahavamsa the Tamils are referred to as the Yakkhas (which is a derogatory term used for non believers), and, unlike the real Buddha who was an ordinary human being who attains enlightenment, the Buddha of the Mahavamsa is presented as a supernatural, devious power. **Throughout the Mahavamsa there is reference to the Tamils as 'non-people' and the mass murder of Tamils by Sinhalese as if it were a righteous thing to do for the sake of Buddhism and to purify the island of non-believers.**

The Tamils on the other hand have a very ancient literature and history. Tamil is in fact the only ancient classical living language and so has records of remarkable ancient wisdom and knowledge, especially in science: in astronomy, in human sciences, in environmental sciences, in social science, in mathematics.

Britain's failure

By the time the European colonisers came to Sri Lanka the two separate peoples, the Tamils and the Sinhalese, had established strong homelands in two distinct geographical regions, the Tamils in the North and East, the Sinhalese in the South and West. The British conquered the island in parts, and when it had military control over all the territory in the island it annexed the smaller Tamil homeland to the larger Sinhalese kingdoms. The British also brought over from India hundreds of thousands of Tamils to work in miserable conditions in the tea plantations in the central highlands of the island, many thousands died on the terrible journey there. **When the British colonisers left the island in 1948 they did not restore the homelands to the state they were in when they found them. Instead they imposed a constitution on the whole island and handed over the master rule to the Sinhalese elites in the South. Responsibility for this failure to restore sovereignty to the Tamils and responsibility for the imposition of a constituion, both of which were contrary to any true democratic process, must be taken by British people of today.**

1977 Elections

Since the time of the transfer of master rule, the Sinhalese elites have been trying to eliminate the Tamils (using the Mahavamsa to justify this) and dispossess the Tamils of their homeland. The first major act of aggression against the Tamils happened just months after independence. The Tamils working in the tea plantations had their voting rights and their citizen rights cut off, leaving them stateless and without a political voice. The Tamils' cultural way of life, our language, our homeland, our political rights, our human rights, all came under attack. Thousands of Tamils were killed in the anti-Tamil pogroms, which were organised by Sinhalese monks and the government forces working together. In the 1960s the Sri Lankan army, which is almost exclusively Sinhalese, was sent in to put down the peaceful protests by Tamils for their rights, long before there was any murmur of armed self-defence. In 1977, the last island-wide elections, the Tamils voted overwhelmingly for self-determination and independence for the North/East Tamil homeland.

Political voice

The anti-Tamil pogrom which followed this vote was designed to silence this political voice, and the elected Tamil MPs were abused and threatened with violence in parliament by Sinhalese Members. The Sinhalese government then passed an act which made standing for secession illegal, forcing the Tamil MPs who had only that mandate, to quit parliament. The armed struggle which was launched to defend the Tamils in the face of genocide has only become stronger with every attack against the Tamil people. Those attacks have increased with ferocity year by year, and have increasingly drawn in the support of many of the major imperialist and regional imperialist powers.

The first woman Prime Minister in the world, Srimavo Bandaranaike, was the second ruler to send the Sri Lankan Army into the Tamil homeland (her husband Solomon Dias Bandaranaike was the first); She is Prime Minister today as well, and her daughter is the President. The President, a one time student of Sorbonne in Paris, has used the international public relations mechanisms to block out any news of the war in the Tamil homelands, she has planted her own people in the various news agencies, she has made it unsafe for any foreigners who want to do anything that is deemed to be against the state's interests, she has used the oppressive 'peace and reconciliation' arguments that Albert Nolan exposes as contrary to justice to implant her version of the truth on virtually every NGO working in the field. Each successive Sinhalese government has used the word 'terrorists' in the way that the Mahavamsa used the word 'Yakkha', except with the added bonus that during colonial days using the word 'savage' would excuse killings and denial of rights, the post-colonial word 'terrorist' in addition attracts and justifies international military aid to destroy a people.

(Continued on page16)

NEWS BRIEFS

Tigers release 2 EPDP men

The Liberation Tigers released two members of the EPDP to the ICRCon March 23 at Mallavi in the Vanni around 10.30 a.m. They said the EPDP cadres were being released on humanitarian grounds.

The two EPDP members, Karuppaiah Ketheeswaran of Mankulam and Christian Lesten Ramesh of Jaffna, had surrendered to the LTTE in November last year.

This is the second good will gesture made by the Liberation Tigers towards the EPDP this year.

On March 4, the LTTE released three members of the EPDP, who had been in their custody on humanitarian grounds.

LTTE defuse the bombs

Sri Lankan armed forces dropped bombs on Tamil homes at Vaharai on 22 March at 7:30 AM. Four Tamil school children were injured in the air assault. Though many bombs were dropped, only four exploded. Many fell on mudland and streams and did not explode. As a result, injuries to civilians were fortunately minimised. The Sinhalese government announced it had targeted LTTE positions using special equipment, but no LTTE targets were in fact hit. The following day LTTE bomb disposal experts vacated the affected sites and defused the unexploded bombs.

Fast unto death in Kalutara jail

Five political prisoners in Sri Lanka's high security Kalutara jail, 43 kilometers south of Colombo, began a fast unto death today demanding that the government should begin legal proceedings against them or release them from the prolonged incarceration.

All Tamil and Muslim political prisoners who were held in the Welikada jail in Colombo were transferred to Kalutara last year after they began a fast unto death there which was brutally crushed by Sri Lankan Police.

Three were massacred on December 1 when Sinhala prisoners attacked these Tamil and Muslim political prisoners in the Kalutara jail.

Evidence has emerged recently at a commission of inquiry appointed to look into the Kalutara prison massacre that it was done with the connivance of some prison officials and Sri Lankan army sentries posted at the jail.

Of the five prisoners who began the fast, four were identified as

1. Thambaiah Sri Kanthan (A Tamil policemen arrested from the Nuwara Eliya Police station where he had been posted)
2. Wahabdeen
3. Kandaiah Paramasamy
4. Paramasamy Yogarajah

(Tamil Net)

JAFFNA: SUICIDE ON THE INCREASE

The suicide rate among Tamils is on the increase in army occupied Jaffna according to statistics released by the Jaffna teaching hospital. It is reported that 44 people committed suicide in January, 43 in February and 32 in March so far. Majority of the deaths occurred between the ages of 20 and 24. Major cause has been depression brought about by army occupation and related problems.

UNDP operations hampered

The Humanitarian Assistance Advisor to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Jaffna told the local NGO consortium at a special meeting this week that the Sri Lankan army and the Sri Lankan government are against the UNDP working in the peninsula through local Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The President of the Jaffna NGO consortium, Mr. S. Paramanathan and its secretary, Mr. S. Sivasubramaniam met the UNDP official at their office in Raasavin Thottam in Jaffna town.

The UNDP official told them that his agency is facing a lot of difficulties working in Jaffna because it cannot work through the local NGOs.

He said that the UNDP has to get special permission from the Sri Lankan President to work on projects in Jaffna.

(Tamil net)

Army blocks movements

Occupying Sri Lankan armed forces have banned Tamils aged 16-40 from entering LTTE controlled sectors of Jaffna. The restrictions apply to the Vadamaradchy east sector.

Soldiers at Vallipuram Kovil checkpost (the entry-point to Vadamaradchy east) are ruthlessly blocking the passage of people. In addition, the army has declared illegal the functioning of Ampan pharmacy in LTTE-controlled territory. The army has also stopped civilians taking food and clothes to the area and disallowed people from carrying over 350 rupees into the region.

Home guards interdicted

175 homeguards and 7 reserve policemen were interdicted today by the Sri Lankan defence authorities whenon March 20 they refused to take up duties in Aranthalawa, on the boarder between Amparai and Batticaloa districts.

The policemen and the homeguards were ordered to take up duties in the boarder region which has regularly come under attack by the Liberation Tigers, operating in the western hinterland of Batticaloa.

The homeguards and the policemen refused to take up duties amidst reports that the Liberation Tigers are preparing for a major operation in the Batticaloa district.

Meanwhile police sources in Amparai said that the Special Task Force (STF) operation in the Kanjikudichcha Aaru jungles continues.

They said that the STF had found an abandoned camp of the Liberation Tigers during the operation.

Army raids PLOTE office in Chava

The Sri Lankan army surrounded the PLOTE office in Chavakachcheri in Jaffna this morning and arrested every one in the premises said sources this afternoon. The SLA has not officially said anything about this unprecedented move.

However, informed sources in Jaffna said that according to initial reports from Chavakachcheri the army had swooped on the PLOTE office on information that two persons suspected to be members of the Liberation Tigers were operating against the SLA in the area from the PLOTE's Chavakachcheri branch premises.

The persons suspected to LTTE operatives were also taken away by the army said sources.

The PLOTE office in Colombo, however, said that they were not aware of the incident.

Tamil shop in Colombo robbed

Sri Lankan security forces in a white van got out and robbed a Tamil shop in Colpetty (Colombo) on 3 March at 9.30 PM, and loaded the shop's contents and vanished. The shop was in a well-guarded area since it was close to the President's residence at Temple trees. Workers at the shop who leaked this to a local newspaper were arrested by security forces.

Annai Poopathy remembered

Annai Poopathy's memorial celebrations took place yesterday at Puthukudiyiruppu National Heroes Hall at 9 AM. The eternal flame was lit by Thiyagam, head of National Heros Office. Tamil Eelam's national flag was raised by Mullaitivu's administrative head Ilamcheran. Ms Kalaichudar, in charge of Puthukudiyiruppu, lit the lamb and placed a garland on Annai Poopathy's portrait. Many Tamils from all walks of life and LTTE fighters attended the celebrations and paid their respects by placing garlands. Meanwhile, all parts of the town were decorated with the red and yellow flags of Tamil Eelam.

Policeman was over powered

A Sri Lankan Police constable who attempted to rape a 3 month pregnant woman in Thinneveli in Jaffna on the night of March 15 was caught and severely assaulted by a group of local civilians. The Police constable had forced his way in to the house of Tharmarajah Balachandran and had attempted to molest his wife Premalatha Balachandran, 28, a mother of three.

The constable assaulted Balachandran and Premalatha's aunt who had tried to stop him. However, neighbours have rushed to Balachandran's house upon hearing the screens of Premalatha's aunt.

The constable, seeing the crowd ran away and hid in a manioc plantation nearby. When the neighbours went and searched for him, he assaulted several of them, but he was overpowered. The constable was tied to a pillar and was severely assaulted by the people. The matter was later brought to the notice of Police in Kopai who took away the constable.

Balachandran, his wife and wife's aunt are admitted to the Jaffna hospital with injuries.

(Tamil net)

Annai Poopathy remembered

Celebrations are taking place all over Tamil Eelam in memory of Annai Poopathy, who demanded justice from the Indian administration and died after fasting for 30 days on 19 April 1988. At that time, Indian Peace Keeping Forces were occupying the North and East. In her memory, the Tamil people have launched several social projects supplying free labour, and taking part in other cultural events to coincide with the day she began her fast.

Arbitrary arrest of 3 women

The occupying Sinhalese army arbitrarily arrested 3 Tamil women at Vallipuram Kovil checkpoint (near Point Pedro, Jaffna) as they returned home from shopping on 9 March 1998. The women - Kandasamy Maheswary (46) mother of four, Thavasingam Satkunathevi (40) mother of five and Anandakumar Indira (31) mother of three - were all from Nakarkovil further South East.

Torture victim in hospital

Sinnavan Mahendirajah, 36 was admitted to the Jaffna hospital on March 19 for internal damage caused by torture while he was in the custody of the Sri Lankan army Chankanai in Jaffna. He was arrested by the local army on March 3 and was released on March 12.

Sinnavan had been threatened by the SLA soldiers who had arrested him that he should not reveal what they had done to him to any one.

Fearing death, Sinnavan had attempted to treat his severe internal pains with locally obtained Ayurvedic oils. But his conditioned had deteriorated, compelling his family to rush him to the Jaffna hospital for treatment.

(Tamil net)

Batticaloa MPs keep away

The three TULF MPs from the Batticaloa district, Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham, P. Selvarajah and K. Thurairajasingham kept away from a dinner for the government Parliamentary group hosted by Sri Lankan President on March 17 against the wishes of the party's secretary general Mr. R. Sampanthan.

They said that TULF MPs have not accepted the President's invitation in the past as attending the dinner would be tantamount to acknowledging that the party is part of the PA government's parliamentary group.

Ex-militant groups, the EPDP and the PLOTE regularly attend the dinner hosted by the President for her Parliamentary group.

The TULF had a discussion over the issue this afternoon as differences in opinion about attending this evening's function had arisen among the party MPs.

Mr. Sampanthan had insisted that he will go for the dinner as the party ihad to honour the President's idnvitation.

ICRC Officials meet LTTE captives

The Internnational Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on March 17 its officials had met for the first time seven Srilanka seamen held captive by Tamil Tiger rebels since their ship was torched last July.

This morning ICRC offcials visited the seven Sri Lanka crew members of the MV Missen. They (the crew)were able to write messages to the families which willbe conveyed by the ICRC, 'an LICRC spokeman told Reuters in Colombo. He did not give futher details,including where the crew were being held.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam(LTTE) revels forced their way on a Sri Lankan ship, MV Missen, and took hostage its nine-member crew before setting the vessel on fire off the island's nothwest coast.

The ship was not carrying any passengers at the time of the attack.

Its Indonesian captain and the chief engineer were released three days afterfollowing ICRC's intervention, but the other crew members are still being held by the rebels.

Army men shoot dead 6-yr old

The Sinhalese army in Kiran (Batticaloa) has gunned down a 6-year old Tamil girl who had been held in their custody. Sinhalese soldiers asked her and other detained Tamils to run away from the camp, as though they had been released, but then opened fire as they ran. Peethamparam Sasikala is the dead girl. She had only a few weeks ago started school. The incident took place close to the bridge at Kiran.

Sinhala in Jaffna courts

The judges in the Jaffna courts are finding it difficult to carry out their duties as reports are being filed in the Sinhala language which they cannot comprehend,said M.Thirunaavukkarasu,the Mallakam judge, during a discussion yesterday with a delegation from the United States embassy in Colombo. He pointed out that civilians in Jaffna are unable to understand the charges against them, as the reports filed by the Sri Lankan police arein Sinhala. This contravenes their fundamental rights he told the American offcials. The Batticaloa Municipal council passed a unanimous resolution last year objecting to the Sri Lankan Police's practice of taking down complaints and filing reports in Sinhala in the Batticaloa district.

(Tamil Net)

15 M.P.s to visit Norway

A team of 15 Sri Lankan parliamentarians representing all the political parties in the Parliament will visit Norway from March 29 to April 6 to study the fisheries industry in that country and examine constitutional affairs said government sources. Dharmalingam Siddarthan MP, the leader of PLOTE, and Douglas Devannda, the leader of the EPDP left Colombo on March 25 to Oslo via London.

M.M Zuhair MP of Sri Lanka Nuslim Congress, S.Sivalingam MP of the Ceylon Workers Congress and Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs, Ms. Nirupama Rajapaksha are alsoin the delegation.

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UNHCR to assist displaced persons

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has said on it would provide millions of rupees to help thousands of people displaced in Sri Lanka's ethnic war.

"UNHCR hopes that its total assistance programme in 1998 of 302.73 million rupees ($4.9 million) will not only cover the emergency needs of the displaced people in the north but will also lead to the return and reintegration of the displaced," it said in a statement.

The statement said the UN refugee agency had signed an agreement with Sri Lanka's Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority of the North to provide financial assistance for health, temporary shelter, income generation and other schemes in Jaffna.

It said a number of other non-governmental organisations would be given money to implement rehabilitation schemes in other parts of the country, particularly in the northern Wanni region and the eastern Trincomalee district.

(Reuters)

(Continued from page12)

Tamil academics

It has now been informatively argued, by a non Tamil, that what is happening is deliberate intention of genocide *(The International Crime of Genocide: The Case of the Tamil People In Sri Lanka by Lutz Oette, winner of the 1996 Cheng Cheng Nan Prize in International Law)*. I emphasise that this has been done by a non Tamil, because thousands of Tamils have been saying this is genocide for many years. Maybe due to language, cultural differences or perspectives of oppressor and oppressed, Tamils have not been taken seriously, in fact they have nearly always been branded as biased and as exaggerators. In short, Tamil academics and professionals who have the power of good use of English have themselves, with a few notable exceptions, failed to give voice to the ordinary mass of Tamil people because of their own unaware colonised mentalities.

Deeply humane

On the other side we must take a look at the Tamil liberation struggle. Until one reads the words or talks directly to members, or ex-members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, it is hard to see beyond the disinformation process. But if you search, these words and contacts are there. **For eg. if you read the words of the leader of the LTTE, Pirabakaran, his speeches on International Women's Day, his speeches on National Heroes Day, his interviews with Tamil cultural and educational societies, you will see a person who is deeply humane and intelligent, someone who loves freedom, truth, and who cares for every human being as someone precious. The way he addresses our people, is with respect and dignity for their intelligence, for their suffering, for their human courage. It is not hard to see how the millions of Tamils support his leadership, why they call him 'brother' (Thumbi - younger brother if they are elders, Annan - elder brother if they are younger). Everyone that has been close to him (and there are many of these people in the Tamil exile community in London), talks about him with love in their eyes and their voices, and their anecdotes of life with him are joyful. He has become like a guiding philosopher for them to understand life. His life's work has become the new cultural regeneration towards a more progressive Tamil society.**

A de facto state

In the areas of the Tamil homeland which the LTTE has liberated from Sri Lankan army occupation, I can tell you about the progress of women, because it has often been said by Tamils in our history that until women are free and can walk safely in all places at all hours, we do not have a free society. In Jaffna, in particular (as it is a peninsular and therefore offered the possibility of easier long term protection from Sinhalese army assault), the LTTE created a de facto state during the period 1990-95. In this period all those women who experienced this life have said some remarkable things. Rape, sexual harassment, pornography and prostitution had been **completely eliminated.** The fear of these things was also gone, women of all backgrounds talk of walking in the streets at night on their own feeling completely safe. Domestic violence had virtually completely disappeared (I was given a figure of 99% by a reliable source). The worst excesses of bullying at school (ie those entailing physical abuse) had gone. Tamil society itself was always gentle, the new society was even more so. Women were present in their thousands in the police force, as judges and lawyers, in the social services and in education. In all of these sections women made up 50% of the work force, and share in equal numbers the highest positions of responsibility too. Women have been very influential in shaping policy, creating laws and ensuring their implementation. In addition to this women also are in the armed section of the freedom struggle. The last figure we have for the number of Women Tigers is 3,000, though it is likely to be far higher now as the total numbers of LTTE fighters have grown enormously because the Sri Lankan army operations and atrocities have intensified massively.

The few non Tamil researchers who have done anthropological and social research on our liberation movement have come with their attitudes of superiority and European cultural norms to 'judge' us. Tamil culture has a non-Aryan root, and this makes a huge difference in the ways in which we live, perceive our relationships with each other, our way of organising ourselves, our celebrations, our grieving processes, our feelings for life and our priorities. Tamil culture is a very scientific rational culture.

I hope CIIR will live up to its ideals as expressed in Albert Nolan's work 'Taking Sides', and I hope that it will endeavour to take sides in our struggle.

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Girl student stripped naked and whipped

A GCE (O.L) student of Vincent girls's High School in Batticaloa was stripped naked and whipped by the SLA on March 17 claimed her parents. The girl,17, who did not want to be identified, lives in the village of Palugamam with her parents. On March 17, the girl had gone to school around 2 a.m. in the afternoon to obtain her admission card for a GCE (O.L) practical exam which was to be held the next day. And then she had gone to see a friend at Surya Lane near the Batticaloa hospital. Here, according to her account, she was picked up by the SLA. She says that the soldiers were accompanied by members of a Tamil para-military group operating in Batticaloa with the army.

She was taken to a camp and was stripped naked and beaten with sticks. The girl has several scars and contusions on her back. She was released around 6 p.m. in the evening.

Fr. S.J. Emmanuel at Trafalgar Square

"Let not the world connive with genocide of Tamils"

The text of a speech delivered by
Fr. Dr. S.J. Emmanuel
on the occassion of a Tamil
procession and rally on February 1 1998

Sisters and Brothers, Friends and Countrymen,

While His Royal Highness Prince Charles of this land is going from London to Colombo to preside over the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Independence of Sri Lanka, we Tamils from all over Britain have gathered here at Trafalgar Square, a historic and meaningful venue for all Britons. It is here they commemorate the memory of Admiral Lord Nelson, who led Britain to Victory against the French, in the Battle of Waterloo.

We are here, braving this shivering cold, to express our respect to all those fallen victims in the struggle for our feedom, to express our solidarity with all the brave people of Thamil Eelam, who have not and who will not succumb to an unjust Sinhala Rule over our homeland, to express our solidarity with those who will not give into any Sinhala attempts to buy over them as false-leaders and continue their subjugation of a whole Tamil nation.

We are here in our thousands to express our deepest concerns of this hour to people of Britain and of the world and to vow before the world that we Tamils expatriates all over the world will not rest until and unless, the Sri Lankan Government gives up its Sinhala Imperialism of the last 50 years, until and unless we Tamils enjoy in our homeland of Thamil Eelam equal rights as a nation and a people to determine our own future.

As one bearing the scars of walking with my people for the last fifty years, especially during the last fifteen years in facing an inhuman war let loose on the Tamils of Thamil Eelam by the Sri Lankan Government, as a direct victim and a witness of the enormous amount of suffering, death and destruction and displacement inflicted on thousands of my sisters and brothers by the present Sri Lankan Government, in not only bombing and shelling 50,000 Tamil civilians out of life, not only looting and destroying their property, not only destroying over two thousand Hindu Temples, Christian Churches, Schools and Hospitals - all these genocidal crimes committed under the cover of a media-blockade, but also daring to occupy our Tamil homelands, watered and built up by our blood and sweat, to rule and rape the land under an alien Lion Flag, let me ask, in the name of God, in the name of humanity, in the name of all democratic institutions of the world, with what right and in what conscience is the Sri Lankan Government, after all these years of genocidal acts against our people, after shamefully occupying our land militrily and keeping our people virtually as prisoners and victims of their oppression, rape and murder daring to celebrate an Independence? How can a Government that practices slavery and oppression of a people celebrate Independence?

Let our gathering here be a message to the world and to Britain in particular. As Tamils citizens of Britain, as expatriates from Thamil Ealam, and above all - as brothers and sisters of the 800,000 Tamils displaced all over the world as refugees and expatriates fleeing Sri Lanka's violence - we have rallied here at the heart of London, to give a message to the world and to Britain in particular.

Hear you free people of the United Kingdom! Hear you free nations of the world! Hear all of you, who have human dignity, freedom, justice and welfare of nations at heart!

We Tamils, we too were once a free people! with a Kingdom of our own in the North and East of Ceylon! We too, as a people, cherished a long history and culture not second to any.

But alas, from the 16th. century, our kingdom gave way to successive colonial rules. The first two colonial powers, the Portuguese and the Dutch, administered the country giving equality of rights and status to all the peoples of the country - the Sinhalese and the Tamils, who have inhabited the country for over two thousand years

But your ancestors - the Britons - went a step further beyond the Portuguese and the Dutch to bring all the peoples of the country - all under one centralised administration, and introduced a unitary state with all the powers vested in the Governor and in his State Council.

On the eve of their departure from our shores, they constituted a Parliament for this unitary state of Ceylon. Enlightened by the quarrels of our past history and moved by reasonable fears, we Tamils demanded constitutional and jurisdictional protection for the minorities. But your ancestors left us in a hurry without adequate provisions for the protection of minorities. They left the whole power to rule in the hands of a permanent majority Sinhala Buddhists. And now we see and experience the consequences of such a transfer of power.

Once the British left our shores, there began the mockery of democracy by a permanent majority Sinhala, turning and twisting noble institutions to suit their hunger for power and wealth. Making use of the One-Nation-State introduced by the British, as a cloak or a Trojan Horse, hiding the historical truths concerning the Tamil nation, the power hungry Sinhala Buddhists with a hidden agenda for imperial power, proclaimed themselves as the one new Nation and State, with Ceylon as the Sinhala Land of Buddhism and Ceylonese to mean only Sinhalese. This Trojan-horse play of Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinism strengthened or encouraged even the non-chauvinistic Sinhalese to believe in the myth propagated by a Buddhist monk of the 8th.century AD. **According to this Mahavamsa-myth and its consequent mind-set that holds sway over the present Sinhala Buddhists, Ceylon is a Sinhala Buddhist country owned and administered only by Sinhala Buddhists. Others are mere tenants or occupants allowed to live on the generosity of the Sinhala Buddhist Landlord.**

Today when the Snhala majority talk of peace, they mean a peace between the landlord and the tenant, between the Master and the servant. But we Tamils , nor do any respectable human being of this century, can accept that as true peace.

> *"Unlike the French or the Germans or the Americans, you were a part of our history, and we were a part of your history...."*

With a "stolen power" in their hands, and with this myth-mindset to encourage them, the Sinhala Buddhist majority and their Governments have tried and are trying systematically to run over the Tamils and establish a Sinhala Buddhist Imperialism throughout the length and breadth of Ceylon. In spite of repeated requests of the Tamils, based on fears that the Sinhala majority will overrun us and decimate us, we then demanded the British to make constitutional protection for us. But unfortunately it was not done.

It is now 50 years since your ancestors left us in that "democracy" which was actually an undemocratic state of Tamil-submission to Sinhalese-rule. **The Sinhala Buddhists, today in protesting against the visit of Prince Chales for the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, accuse you British of having killed 30,000 Ceylonese during those 150 years of British rule. Well I like to point out here how the Sinhalese have outdone you. Within a short period of 50 years, they have killed over 60,000 Tamil civilians, destroyed all their properties and dispersed more than a million of these Tamils as refugees and displaced people in all parts of the world.**

And today 50 years after your Government Agent in Jaffna, lowered the Union Jack in Jaffna Esplanade, exactly on that spot a Lion Flag is flying to signify the ruling and raping of the Tamil areas under a Sinhala Siege! Is that the freedom and the democracy, the British bequethed to Ceylon?

How do the British feel about these? What do we expect from the British Nation and its Government? Unlike the French or the Germans or the Americans, You were a part of our history and we were a part of your history - for over 150 years. Can you and your Government, distance yourself in any way from the atrocities of the present Sri Lankan Government, still a member of the Commonwealth, still a beneficiary and friend of Britain? Knowing fully well the conflict , the roots of the conflict, the gradual unfolding of Chauvinistic power, the stages of State-terrorism provoking Tamil resistance, the inhuman and massive violations of human rights of a whole people, can Britain remain so neutral, distance itself from the Sri Lankan conflict and carry on, like the other countries Japan, France or Germany?

How come that Britain does more to help the war of President Chandrika aimed at the extermination of Tamils and much less to mediate peace and justice among the Sinhalese and the Tamils?

You know the history of this conflict more than any country in the world. How come that you swallow or pretend to believe, that this so called "war for peace" of Chandrika and Ratwatte is only against Terrorism? Were you not a witness of the anti-Tamil riots and the holocaust of 1983 and the 30 years of State-terrorism

Your Foreign Minister, soon after the New Labour victory, promised that the concern for human rights and the use of British arms in the internal conflict of other countries will be his priorites. What is happening during the last one year?

Between 1948 and 1998, the hidden agenda of Sinhala Imperialism unfolded itself through a series of legal and administrative massacres have taken place in the name of democracy in Sri Lanka.

We are standing not very far from the Mother of Parliaments, the House of Commons, the bastion of democracy and justice. 50 years ago, the post-war British Government led by a Labour Clement Atlee sat over the transfer of power from London to Colombo.

We humbly urge the present Government to recognise the historical obligation it has today. It was then the role of a post-war Labour government led by Clement Atlee to preside over the transfer of power from British Colonialism to an independenct Ceylon.

Let the world and the powers that be, which have known these massive violations of human rights and genocidal massacres against a people, and still not lifting a finger to help us out of these massacres, take them to the sanctuaries of their conscience and ask why they are still maintaining a conniving silence, if not a conniving friendship, with regard to massive violations of human rights by the Sri Lankan Government.

No sooner did the British relinquish powers to the first Parliament of Ceylon, the Sinhala Buddhist majority started its hidden agenda of planned but slow genocide of the Tamils. While making wild promises and baiting ministerial portfolios to Tamil politicians the permanent majority Sinhala Buddhist Government went ahead with its massacres.

Massacre No.1 - the disenfranchisement of a million Tamils of Indian origin so as to reduce the Tamil parliamentary strength.

Massacre No.2 - the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 - to launch out a series of anti-Tamil discriminations in language, education, employment, promotions etc.

Massacre No.3 - A massive state-aided colonisation of Traditional Tamil homelands so as to claim Sinhala proprietorship over the whole island.

Parallel to these step by step massacres through laws and practices, the Sinhala Majority were operating a series of anti-Tamil mob-violence. Every time the helpless Tamils showed their sorrow and dissatisfaction with the discriminatory laws and practices, the anti-Tamil riots let loose by political and religious leaders among the Sinhalese killed, burnt, looted and raped all that was Tamil. The slightest murmur of Tamil dissatisfaction was met with setting fires to Tamils and their properties. Can any British claim ignorance of what was happening on that post-colonial island from 1948 onwards? At least for the first thirty years?

Robin cook:Concern for HumanRights?

No power came to help this once glorious Tamil nation now being subjugated and discriminated and destroyed. The democratic pleas of the non-violent Tamils fell on deaf ears. We were reduced to our ashes. And no democracy in the world came to our help. It was in this context of being reduced to a helpless and dwindling minority, of being pushed into a corner for survival, that the Tamils, raised a unanimous cry for survival - leave us alone in our ancestral homeland, leave us alone without any of your enticements or favours. We want to be a free people, in our own home, enjoying human dignity, determining our future destiny. Leave us alone.

This was the helpless cry expressed in the clear outcome of the last general election in which all the Tamils participated. **Since the 1977 elections, no proper parliamentary elections have been held or participated in the North and East of Sri Lanka. It was at this elections by an overwhelming mandate of more than 75% votes, the Tamil rejected the unitary system of Government in which a permanent Sinhala majority exercised imperialistic and genocidal powers over the Tamils and demanded a separate state of Thamil Eelam. The Tamils want to be recognised as a distinct people with a distinct land and history and culture, with power to determine their destinies. What is wrong or undemocratic about that?**

In the context of the present situation, when a so called "War for Peace" is bleeding the country to death and disaster, what can we do?

In this situation, we want to be saved from the destruction still continued by Sri Lanka aginst the Tamil people. We want all the democratic nations of the world not to collaborate in this genocide, not to aid a war against us, not to aid a country that is starving, oppressing and raping us,

We want all of you nations to bring Sri Lanka to its senses, to tell them of the basic human rights they must respect, to stop immediately the war and violence against the Tamils, to lift all the inhuman ban on food, medicine and the media blockade on the North and East, to withdraw its army from occupied territories, to stop destroying temples and churches, to stop all their efforts at Sinhalisation of our homeland.

Leave us alone as a people and a nation, to determine our future. We have been a people for many many centuries, and during the last forty years, we have suffered as a people, we have every right to be a people.

Long Live Thamil Eelam!
Long Live Sri Lanka!

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Mandela gives Clinton a lesson in political morality

President Bill Clinton kept on smiling, reported Mary Braid writing for *THE INDEPENDENT,* London, from Cape Town, South Africa. "But he must have been squirming as President Nelson Mandela, standing beside him, told the world that South Africa would not be bullied into abandoning its Iranian, Libyan and Cuban allies, enemies of the United States".

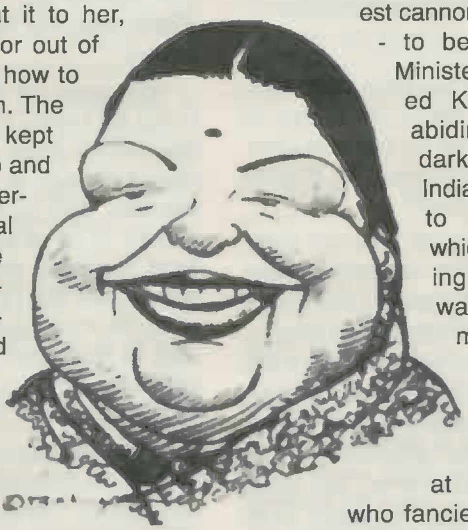
"Mr.Mandela, 79, had to lean on Mr.Clinton as they walked to the joint press conference at Tuynhuys, his Cape Town residence. But he needed no support from the American president when it came to foreign policy. Cuba's Fidel Castro and Iran's former presiden Hashemi Rafsanjani were among the first heads of state invited to the new South Africa, said Mr.Mandela."I have also invited (Muammar) Gaddafi.... because moral authority dictates that we should not abandon those who helped us in the darkest hour".

The NEW YORK TIMES reported that Mr.Mandela suggested , fondly, but firmly that "the United States, as the leader of the world, should set an example to all of us, by reaching out to its enemies and saying"Let's sit down and talk peace". The standing of the United States would be "tremendously enhanced", he said.

Mr.Clinton listened intently, his face betraying no emotion, said the report. It was an extraordinary moment. The rules of the diplomatic game do not permit the leader of one country to lecture the leader of another. But Mr.Mandela has such towering, worldwide moral authority that the rules do not apply to him, and American officials took no offense at his remarks.

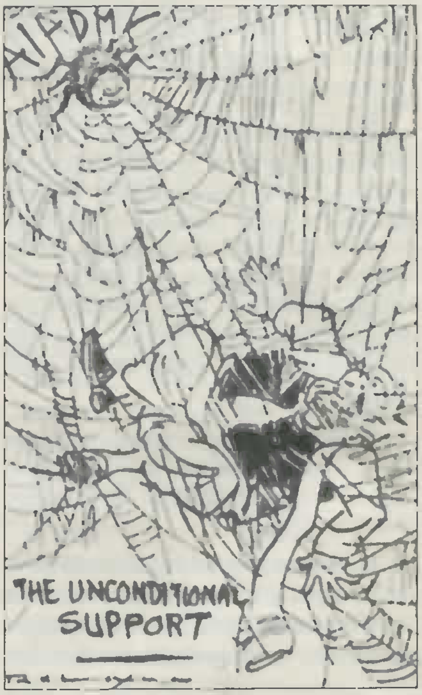
.......Mandela, at 79 years old, 28 years Mr.Clinton's senior. acted every bit his equal.

Queen Bee Jayalalitha



You must grant it to her, whether in power or out of power, she knows how to command attention. The AIADMK supremo kept the BJP leadership and the country on tenterhooks for several days before she would pledge support for the formation of a BJP-led government at the centre. For an ageing actress she made quite a song and dance before giving in; the conditions she was rumored to have placed before the BJP leadership would have made anyone lose sleep.

For example, she had demanded that Subramaniam Swamy - that loosest cannon in Indian politics - to be made Finance Minister. She had wanted Karunanidhi, "her abiding anathema in dark glasses as an Indian journalist put it, to be sent home, which was again asking too much. She wanted Tamil to be made an official language; not that she meant it, but she wanted to have a dig at her bete noire, who fancies himself as the guardian of Tamil prose and verse. All in all, it was a dramatic performance, temperamental maybe, but who could blame her when Vajpayee and company in Delhi failed to wish her "Happy Birthday". ! How can we wish her when she was sulking at Poes Gardens and making herself unavailable on the phone, was Delhi's defence. It was a happy ending finally. Or who knows ?



HOW DO NEW NATION STATES GET BORN ?

Eritrea and Chechnya: the forerunners of a future Tamil Eelam

Robin Wright reports for the LOS ANGELES TIMES, March 8,1998, from the Eritrean capital, Asmara.

His official car is an aging Toyota, which he often drives himself. His salary is less than $12,000 a year. Cabinet officials and foreign diplomats lament they sometimes can't find him because he's on campus, seated among fellow students or sequestered studying for his MBA.

Issaias Afewerki is hardly your typical African president.

But, according to the U.S.State Department, he represents the wave of the future - at least what the outside world wants to see happen on the most troubled of continents. Africa's newest state may even have answers to some of the region's oldest problems.

"Eritrea is a success story. Its better than just about anybody else in Africa and there are a lot of reasons for ongoing optimism, despite horrendous obstacles," said a senior U.S.official. "It has a lot of ethnic groups divided by two of the world's major religions. Its economy was destroyed and its people scarred by a 31-year war, Africa's longest war of independence. Yet it brings incredible seriousness to the daunting task of building a country almost from scratch."

But like the war against Ethiopian rule - when Eritrea had no help from either East or West - the little state is doing most of the work on its own. Issaias, an engineering student who

Eritrea's President Afewerki

left college to join the war and eventually rose to become secretary-general and military chief of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, orchestrated war strategy during three decades of living in the bush. Eritrea won independence in 1993.

HOT SPRING profiles here two new nation states Africa's youngest state, Etritrea,and Chechnya, which fought the mighty Russia; both shining examples of how a determined people could win their freedom even against tremendous odds

Today, Issaias, 51, again is trying to defy the odds against success in a country with a per capita annual income of only $ 149. **Eritrea is off to a good start. It has one of the world's lowest crime rates. Police don't even carry guns. The economic growth rate is around 4%, while the current deficit is one-third the West European average.** Refusing to be encumbered by serious debt, Eritrea regularly rejects outside funding and expertise-even for pivotal projects, such as rebuilding the national railway that had not worked since the 1970s. Instead, old railway workers, many in their 60s and 70s, reconstructed the entire thing. It opened this year.

But Eritrea has a long way to go on many fronts. "It's still a one-party state. Many non-government organizations have been forced to leave. And we have concerns about some human rights cases," says the U.S.official.

Issaias, who opted to live in a modest home with his wife, also a former combatant, and their two small children after converting the palace into a museum, admits shortfalls. "Our democracy has not yet been consummated," he said during a recent conversation in a small government guest house.

Again unlike many African leaders, he has even forbidden his picture to be posted in government offices.

Excerpts from an interview with President Afewerki

Q: Eritrea is not only the newest, but one of the poorest countries in Africa. What makes you think you can succeed when so many others have failed for so long?

A: Self-reliance is our negation of the idea of aid. We have an established tradition of self-reliance. There has been a lot of controversy about this. Some simplistically say, after all, you have no resources, you are a poor country. There are no agricultural resources, no minerals, no infrastructure, no natural resources. But how were we able to face(Ethiopian President) Mengistu's army, which was one of the biggest on continent backed by one of the biggest populations? We were able to challenge it, with all its resources, by relying on ourselves economically and militarily.

We learned the hard way. During the war, no one supported us. When (Emperor) Haile Selassie was in Ethiopia, the United States supported Ethiopia. Then Mengistu overthrew Selassie and allied with the Soviet Union. All that time, we got nothing from the U.S. or then the Soviet Union. So we had to find a way to achieve our goals by relying on our own resources. Now the benefit of that experience prevails: We can do it on our own.

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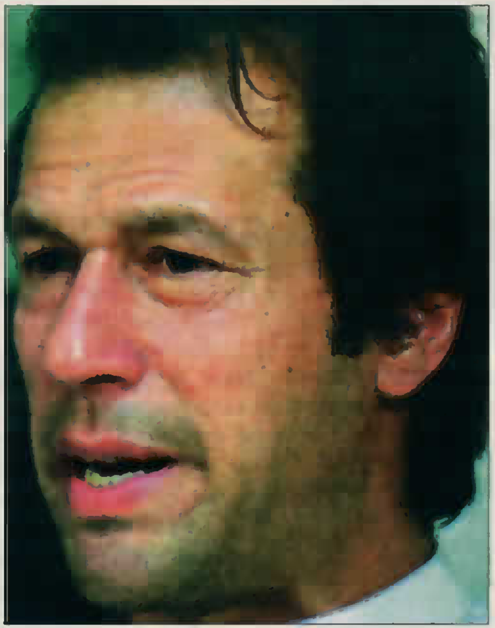
Imran Khan lauds the Chechnyans

Angered by the Pakistan government's refusal to allow Chechen President Aslan Kaskadav to come to Pakistan on his invitation, cricketer turned politician Imran Khan lashed out at the Nawaz Sharif government.



Speaking on Pakistan's National Day on March 23. Imran Khan said the very basis of Pakistan's ideology lay in tatters. "Chechnya is better than Pakistan for unlike us, the Chechens have not bowed to foreign powers. Kaskadav was told that he was not welcome by the government on Russia's bidding as the Russians do not want any country to recognise Chechnya's independence".

"The Chechen people had fought one of the most heroic wars to liberate themselves from the Russians", Imran said. "They had been conquered by the Czar's armies in the mid-19th century after two decades of courageous resistance in which almost 70 percent of the population was decimated. The resistance was led by my hero the great Imam Shamyl.

"I am the only Pakistani to have been in Chechnya since they defeated the Russian army. It was only when I got to Grozny that I began to visualize the magnitude of the sacrifices these fearless people had made to win their freedom", the former Pakistan cricket captain said.

"Hardly a house remained intact, such was the amount of firepower used by the Russians. The entire infrastructure of the little state has been destroyed. Out of a population of one million, almost 1,20,000 people died in the Russian onslaught, which included jets, helicopter gunships, hundreds of tanks, artillery and some 40,000 soldiers.".

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How the mighty Russian army was humbled

KURTLAR
YURDU
ÇEÇENISTAN

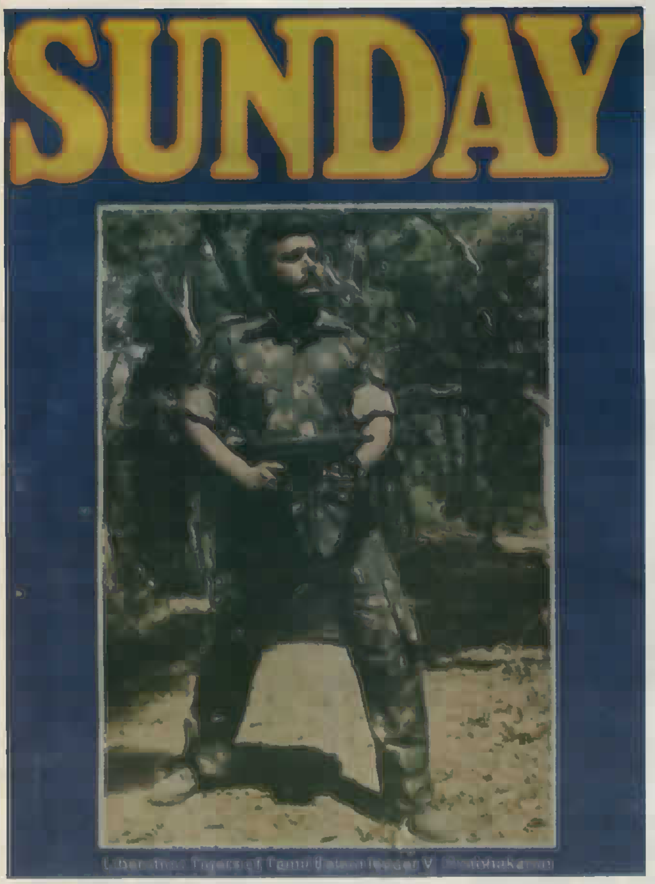
A September 1996 report on the Chechen war said, interalia, :-

"The speed and stealth of the Chechen attack on the capital Grozny in the first week of August took the entrenched Russian forces by surprise. The attack also shattered the illusion the Kremlin had sought to keep alive - that Moscow was merely engaged in mopping-up operations in Chechnya. The rebel forces occupied most of the Chechen capital for more than a week, inflicting heavy Russian casualties, perhaps among the worst since the war started in December 1994.

"The Russian army, which withstood the might of the German Army during the Second World War and which, in the Soviet era, was recognised as one of the world's toughest fighting forces, today stands humbled by a rag-tag bunch of mountain guerillas.

No.2 in the series of interviews given by LTTE leader **Velupillai Pirabhakaran** *to the media.*
Interviewer **Anita Pratap.**
Sunday magazine, Calcutta, 29 September - 5 October, 1985

"We are prepared to Pay for Freedom with Our Lives"



V.Pirabhakaran, leader of Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, told ***Sunday***

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Q: *Why did you choose to go underground?*

A: I did not leave with the intention of going underground. I had to attend to some work in my country. I had to discuss certain matters relating to the peace talks with my lieutenants. I also had to assess for myself the situation and reaction in the Tamil areas. While I was there certain incidents took place (referring to the deportation of A.S.Balasingham, official spokesman of the LTTE) so I continued to remain there.

Q: *What is the reaction of your lieutenants to the cease-fire?*

A: Cease-fire is a drama. Under its guise, the Sri Lankan armed forces are continuing to perpetrate atrocities against our people, massacres are still going on, Tamils are still being driven out of their homes. If it is a true cease-fire, our lieutenants will be happy. We followed the cease-fire in letter and spirit and stopped all our guerrilla operations. But the Sri Lankan armed forces continued, to attack civilians, forcing us to retaliate. I find I have to handle the present situation very carefully. The cease-fire itself is a farce and I also have to handle my lieutenants, who know only too well that it is a drama where the Sri Lanka government is covertly going ahead with its genocide of the Tamils.

Flashback 1985 !

Q: *Why did you choose to go underground when Balasingham was deported?*

A: I could have come back immediately. But I wanted to express my resentment at the deportation order.

Q: *You continued to remain inaccessible even when Rajiv Gandhi summoned the ENLF leaders. Don't you think your inaccessibility has strained relations between the government of India and you?*

A: But I wished to convey my dissatisfaction also, as I strongly felt that the deportation order was unnecessary.

Q: *Then what made you surface again?*

A: There were many reasons. First, because I was underground there were some negative forces, certain anti-liberation forces which in my absence were trying to portray us as dangerous terrorists who were opposed to the peace talks. Second, there was an attempt to isolate and single us out as hard-liners who wanted only a military solution. Rumours were being floated in the public and in some newspapers which started giving grossly exaggerated and distorted news about us, painting us as dangerous terrorists. Third, the Sri Lanka government was exploiting my absence and blaming the LTTE for having killed the TULF ex-MPS.

Q: *What do you hope will come out of your meeting with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi?*

A: We hope to explain our problem clearly to him. Among the issues we want to raise with him is the fact that Jayewardene is using the cease-fire as a front while he goes about systematically massacring the Tamils. We want to try and convince him that what is going on in Sri Lanka is genocide of a race. We want to give him details of what exactly is going on in Sri Lanka even though there is supposed to be a cease-fire. We also want to highlight the fact that the Sri Lanka government has so far not put forward genuine, meaningful set of proposals. So far we have had contacts with the Indian Prime Minister only through third parties. We want to meet him directly so that we can clear a lot of misunderstandings and suspicions

Demonstration in Madras protesting the deportation of LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham. Reputed Tamil journalist, the late Kovai Mahesan is seen addressing the rally.1985

Q: *Do you think the PM will be sympathetic?*

A: I trust he will be.

Q: *Do you feel that in the last three months the Indian government's attitude towards the militants has hardened?*

A: In the beginning I did not think so but after Balasingham was deported I am inclined to believe that the attitude has hardened

Q: *What do you think has caused this change in the Indian government's stance?*

A: I don't know what has caused this change. Perhaps, some international crisis or pressure is responsible. It is not possible for us to ascertain immediately as to what has caused this change, but with time I am sure the reasons will come out.

Q: *Do you think that India has become more pro- Sri Lanka?*

A: So far we have not thought along those lines. But certain incidents create doubts in our minds.

Q: *Why did you not respond immediately to Mr.Gandhi's summons when Thimphu II talks had failed?*

A: Though both the LTTE delegates had come away, one delegate of the other groups was kept back in Thimphu. India wanted the ENLF leaders in Delhi so that they could somehow resume the peace talks. **But when massacres were going on in Vavuniya and Trincomallee, isn't it a mockery that we, who are supposed to defend our people, are engaged in peace talks? When there is no sense of responsibility on the part of the Sri Lanka government to adhere strictly to the cease-fire regulations, peace talks become meaningless. The Sri Lanka government gave no assurances that such massacres will not recur. In the circumstances we decided not to terminate the talks.**

Q: ***Did the LTTE kill the two TULF ex-MPs? The Indian intelligence agencies are positive that you were responsible.***

A: We are not responsible for the killing. What can we do if Indian intelligence agencies make such claims? Immediately after it took place, we denied the claim made by the Sri Lanka government that we were responsible. The ENLF also issued a denial. Even if the Indian intelligence agencies claim that we are responsible the people in Jaffna know that we have not done it. Maybe the Indian intelligence agencies have assumed that we did it, without any evidence. Because I had gone underground they may have come to such conclusions. If we had done it, we would have claimed responsibility, giving our reasons for doing it. We undertake an operation only on the basis of our conviction. So, if we had done it we would not have gone about hiding the fact. For instance, when we shot Alalasundaram (the ex-TULF MP who was killed recently had earlier been shot in the leg by the LTTE) we claimed we had done it. We did not kill him because we thought it was unnecessary. We punished him for his anti-social activities: he had a hand in the co-operative fraud. We produced evidence of his embezzlement. Incidentally, a lot of the documents exposing his nefarious activities were set ablaze on the co-operative premises. We also claimed responsibility when we shot Anandarajah (Principal of St John's school in Jaffna) When the Sri Lanka government announced a reward of Rs five lakhs for information leading to the arrest of his killers, the people of Jaffna came to know the basis of his relationship with the Sri Lanka government. They kept quiet fully understanding why we had killed.

Anandarajah was planning to hold a cricket match with the armed forces at a time when they were killing our people, arresting young Tamil boys indiscriminately, burning Tamil property and raping Tamil women. We had to do away with him because the government was using the impending cricket match as propaganda to give the impression to the world that the Tamil civilians have very cordial relations with the Sri Lanka armed forces and that that ethnic problem is something created by a handful of militants.

Q: *Could not the ex TULF MPs have been killed by some rebel LTTE members?*

A: Absolutely not. Nothing happens in the LTTE without my permission. About the killing I want to say something. I met TULF leaders and assured them that we had not done this killing and that they need not worry about facing such consequences from us. I told them that just because we had shot Alalasundaram some time ago, it did not mean that we were against the TULF. However, I pointed out to them that the gap between them and the younger generation was widening most alarmingly. The younger generation look upon them as betrayers who have given up the struggle for Eelam. The gap is widening all the more because they are not in Eelam facing the people. They have been completely isolated from the realities in Eelam. So, as long as they remain isolated from the Tamil people, they are likely to face such drastic action from the younger generation. The reality is that if I were to give up the Eelam struggle I would face similar action from them.

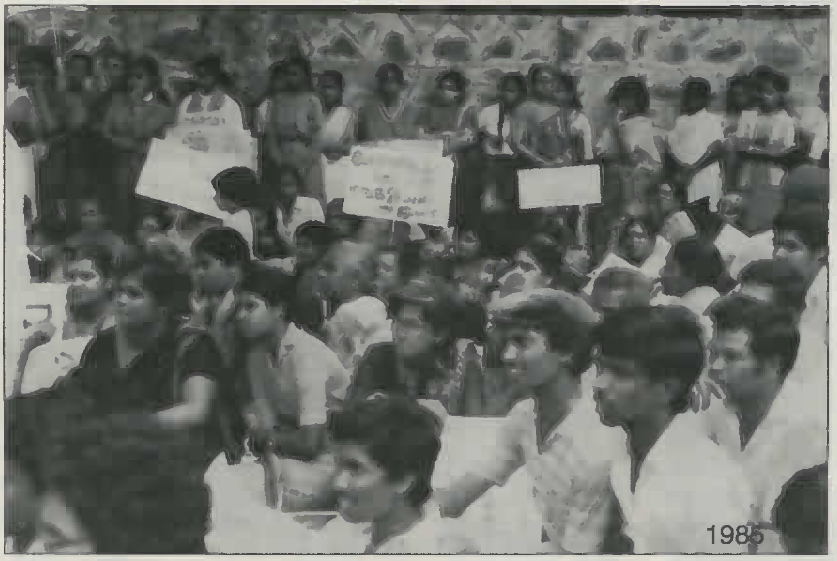
Q: *You mean to say that the younger generation is even more committed to Eelam?*

A: The incidents In Eelam show that a Eelam, a separate state, is the only solution. After facing so many genocidal attacks, the Tamils realise there is no solution other than Eelam for them if they are to live in peace and security

Q: *Apparently the killing of the TULF MPs, for which the LTTE was held responsible, has hardened Mr.Gandhi. In fact, he did not rescind the deportation order on Balasingham even though he had been on the verge of doing so.*

A: We have no connection with the killing. If the Indian government does not rescind the orders because it assumes that we killed the TULF MPs, then it is its mistake. There is no point in punishing us. They should punish the agency that is really guilty so that such incidents do not occur again.

Q: *What was your reaction when Balasingham was deported?*



Demonstration in Adayar, Madras, protesting the deportation of Balasingam

A: We had co-operated so much with the Indian government, so when it happened we felt we had been wronged. The incident has created a certain amount of bitterness between us and them.

Q: *How would you define your relationship with Balasingham?*

A: He is our political advisor. As a true patriot, he reflects the national sentiments of our people.

Q: *Why did India deport Balasingham?*

A: India has said that he was deported in "public interest". But the reason appears to be farcical. Sending him away while keeping us here for peace talks just does not make sense.

Q: *Do you think the real reason was the assumption in Delhi that without Balasingham you would not be able to function?*

A: If they think that, they are making a mistake. They are not dealing with just individuals - Balasingham or Pirabhakaran - but are dealing with the popular will of the people.

Q: *Do you think the Indian government will revoke the deportation orders*

A: I certainly hope so.

Q: *Is the ENLF firm on the demand that the negotiations cannot resume unless Balasingham is brought back?*

A: Without Balasingham I will face problems and difficulties regarding the peace talks. He is the expert on constitutional maters so his presence is crucial for the negotiations. I Will explain these reasons when I meet the PM and urge him to withdraw the deportation order.

Q: *What will happen if the PM says he is not willing to rescind the order?*

A: Then it will create difficulties as far as the negotiations are concerned.

Q: *When you meet Mr Gandhi will you state your view that Eelam is the only solution?*

A: Definitely. We will point out that Eelam is the only solution and also the historical factors that have driven us to this conclusion.

Q: *But the PM has gone on record to state that he will not support any separatist cause.*

A: We will take the opportunity to convey our decision to the PM. If India has another solution, it can be presented to us. But in that case they will have to prove to us why that solution will be effective.

Q: *Do you think a fair and just settlement can be arrived at through these negotiations?*

A: Seeing the way the Sri Lanka Government is acting it is impossible for us to believe that they are serious about settling this problem by means of a negotiated settlement. During the cease-fire they have been purchasing a lot of arms and ammunition. It clearly shows that they are intent upon a military solution. Even as the talks are going on they are going about driving Tamils out of their homeland and making them refugees. There are now 35,000 Tamil refugees in Trincomallee. Nearly 600 innocent Tamils were killed when there was supposed to be a cease-fire.

Q: *There were reports that you had been sighted in Batticaloa disguised as a priest in a cassock.*

A: It is true that I was in Eelam. But the rest is all make-believe.

Q: *Considering that you all firmly believe that there is genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka, what do you think is the best way for India to solve the problem?*

A: They can stop the genocide by helping the freedom-fighters. They can help those who are trying to protect the Tamils. We do need India's moral support.

Q: *Do you think India should opt for a military intervention in Sri Lanka?*

A: I don't support this argument. It will create a lot of problems for India in the international fora.

Q: *Has Rajiv Gandhi's attitude to the Sri Lanka Tamils changed from that of his mother's?*

A: I don't see any big difference.

Q: *One-and-a-half years ago, in an interview to SUNDAY you had predicted that there would be army violence in Vavuniya and Trincomalee. On what basis had you made this prediction which has come true?*

A: I knew that there would be attacks by the army in these areas because there was hectic colonisation there. There is a systematic campaign to encroach on our territory and push all the Tamils into the Jaffna peninsula. We knew what their tactic was so we went ahead and developed bases in Vavuniya and Trincomalee to thwart these attempts. Just yesterday (15 September) we shot down a helicopter in Trincomalee. It is of utmost importance that we protect the frontier or the frontier will come to our doorstep.

> *" . . . the weapons are with the Sri Lanka government. But it is not very difficult for us to capture it from them. After all, most of our weapons are those which we captured from the Sri Lankan armed forces."*

Because of our bases, Jayewardene has not been able to push our frontier in and he will not be able to do so in the future.

Q: *What do you think will happen in the near future?*

A: The struggle for Eelam has blossomed, gathering momentum with each passing day. There will be a separate Tamil Eelam. No force on earth, however mighty, can stop the processes. The only other eventuality is that, all the Tamils will perish in this struggle. We may all be eliminated so that the Tamils as a race is wiped out from the island.

Q: *The Sri Lanka government has claimed that the militants are planning a major offensive. Is this true?*

A: We have not taken any such decision. We have never made false claims or come out with exaggerated stories.

Q: *Balasingham said that Tamil civilians would be armed by the LTTE soon.*

A: He was talking about the future. It is bound to happen in the future.

Q: *Do you expect the Sri Lanka government to launch a massive attack on the Tamils?*

A: Yes we do. It will be on a larger scale than what we have seen in Beirut. The Trincomalee and Vavuniya incidents were far worse than the holocaust in July 1983. Such incidents will occur again with greater savagery. The air attacks on Tamil civilians is the first indication of the determination of the Sri Lanka government to exterminate us.

Q: *What good can your determination do when a couple of bombs are dropped in the Tamil areas?*

A: Bombs and nuclear weapons can kill thousands. But the point is, who have the weapons with them? At the moment the weapons are with the Lanka government. But it is not very difficult for us to capture it from them. After all, most of our weapons are those which we captured from the Sri Lankan armed forces.

Q: *Will you agree to an extension of the cease-fire?*

A: We are not carrying on a war. Ours is a defensive action against the genocide of our people. If the genocide attacks stop, we are willing to stop our guerilla operations. But it is difficult for us to agree to an extension if there is no outside agency to supervise the cease-fire to ensure that there are no truce violations. If cease-fire is to be extended, we would expect both the Sri Lanka government and India, that is acting as mediator, to give us an assurance that there will be no cease-fire violations. Some non-governmental agencies like the International Red Cross, could be entrusted with the task of monitoring the cease-fire and looking into the conditions of the political prisoners.

Q: *Do you think the Sri Lankan army has gone out of control?*

A: I don't think so at all. Jayewardene is masterminding these attacks on the Tamils. He is playing a double game. He gives his army instructions to unleash havoc and then claims that his armed forces have gone out of control as if that would exonerate him. If there was mutiny in the armed forces there would have been a coup by now, overthrowing Jayewardene.

> *"We will fight till we die. When I die, someone else will take over . . . If my generation dies without attaining freedom, the next generation will carry on the struggle"*

Q: Do you think Jayewardene is insincere about a political solution? Will the chances for a negotiated settlement brighten if some other leader is in his place?

A: We don't think a change in the Sinhala leadership will solve the problem. Our history has shown that we have been betrayed and deceived by successive Sinhala governments.

Q: *Are you prepared to face violence and bloodshed on a long-term basis for the sake of Eelam?*

A: Certainly, No nation in the world has ever achieved freedom without bloodshed and sacrifice. We Tamils are prepared to pay for freedom with our lives.

Q: *But, as in South Africa, the freedom struggle can go on for decades without achieving anything?*

A: No time limit can be imposed upon a liberation struggle. Till the goal is achieved it is an ongoing struggle. It is a people's war. So, the death of a few guerilla fighters will no put a halt to the struggle. Often it is the people's determination and international support and circumstances that make a liberation struggle achieve success. **We are fighting in the hope that we will see Eelam in our lifetime. We don't want to pass the burden of a liberation struggle to the next generation: they must enjoy the fruits of our toil. But in case we do not succeed in our lifetime, we have a vision to see that the struggle is passed on to the next generation.**

Q: *Will you participate in the next round of peace talks?*

A: That would depend on the composition of the Sri Lankan delegation.

Q: *Do you think India will impose a settlement upon the militants?*

A: No, I don't think so. There would be no point in trying to impose a settlement because we will not accept anything that will not fulfil the legitimate aspirations of our people.

Q: *Do you think the peace talk is Jayewardene's ploy to buy time while he strengthens his military?*

A: Of course it is. But then time benefits us too.

Q: ***You have become something of a folk hero in the Tamil areas. What do you think are the reasons for your becoming a legend in your own lifetime?***

A: That is for the people to say. Basically, I hate such sentiments because they pander to one's ego. A liberation fighter has to transcend the confines of his ego and his self to immerse himself whole-heartedly in the struggle. We are only symbols of the aspirations of the Tamil people.

Q: *Suppose, due to circumstances, the relations between the Indian government and Tamil militants are strained to such an extent that India withdraws support to you, will you be in a position to continue your liberation struggle alone?*

A: Do we have any other alternative? Fight we must, till our goal is achieved. India's sympathy is a morale-booster, but should India withdraw support it would not mean the end of our liberation struggle. After all we did not start our liberation movement with India's support or with the help of some other external forces. We will fight till we die. When I die someone else will take over. As Subhas Chandra Bose said, 'No liberation fighter can delude himself that he alone can deliver freedom.' If my generation dies without attaining freedom the next generation will carry on the struggle.

❑ ❑ ❑

Heavy imports of military hardware. by Sri Lanka

Michael Hamlyn reporting for THE TIMES, London, on February 6, 1985, said:

"Sri Lanka has ordered ten high-speed gunboats from a British company.... At the same time, it has ordered armoured cars, rifles, and other weapons to strengthen its internal security forces. All these military items are being bought commercially, but the purchases are being assisted by British Government export credits.

The same report said that Sri Lanka sought help from America as well, and quoted General Vernon Walters, a special adviser to President Reagan as saying that his government was not prepared to supply those needs.

"Your armed forces are running out of control", General Walters is quoted as saying.

The above interview by LTTE leader Prabhakaran was given a few months after these reports appeared.

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Suresh case: Continuation of Karen Parker's testimony

Tamils and the right of Self determination

(Continued from the previous issue of Hot Spring)

Karen Parker

HIS LORDSHIP: I have no doubt she is an expert in humanitarian law, from what she has stated and what appears to be some of the papers that she has prepared and who she represents, but I am concerned about saying that I am satisfied, from what I have in front of me, that she is an expert vis-a-vis the Tamils, more so than an expert vis-a-vis disabled people. This is where I am questioning you, sir. Maybe the witness herself can help me out here. But, I will leave it up to you first and maybe you can ask her what you want. I just want you to know that I have a concern with that.

MR. WALDMAN: I understand. In terms of your expertise vis-a-vis the specific issue...let me make it clear, My Lord, I am not putting her forth as an expert vis-a-vis Tamil history but only vis-a-vis how... you see, what distinguishes her from the other witnesses that we brought forward on the issue of international law was that she has actually spent a considerable period of time studying the...

In the Federal Court of Canada : The Manickavasagam Suresh inquiry held before Mr. Justice Teitelbaum March 21 1996.

HIS LORDSHIP: That is fine. Well then, she can give evidence. I have no problem with that, but I have a problem of declaring her an expert...I have no problem in declaring Ms. Parker an expert in international humanitarian law. If that is satisfactory to you then you may proceed to ask any questions that you want. If Mr. Vaillancourt feels that you are going into an area that you should not, and of course we have very loose laws with regard to these matters in this kind of a situation, he may form an objection or not, that is all I am saying. Because, right now I am not satisfied...I cannot say she is an expert on Tamils. She has never been there. She hasn't met them there. What in here would you like to show me, Mr. Waldman, that would indicate that she is an expert? She has...I see in her law reviews there is one, two, three, four, the fifth has something to do with Sri Lanka, the civil war situation in the "Tamil National Question and the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord," then there is "Self-Determination of Peoples and the Tamil National Struggle." There are a number of documents. I am prepared she is a knowledgeable person, to accept that she is a knowledgeable person.

MR. WALDMAN: My Lord, given the nature of the proceedings, I don't think anything hinges on it.

HIS LORDSHIP: No, it doesn't really, but..

MR.. WALDMAN: I would like to be able to ask her questions. The other witnesses didn't have the kind of knowledge on the Tamil situation that she has.

HIS LORDSHIP: They had none.

MR. WALDMAN: They had none. She has studied it and whether we declare her an expert or not, I think it is more important that we get her opinion on it.

HIS LORDSHIP: That is fine. Please forgive me, ma'am.

THE WITNESS: *It is quite all right.*

HIS LORDSHIP: I don't intend to say you are not an expert. But, I, in law, can't say that I can consider you a specifically and special type of expert with regard to the Tamil situation.

THE WITNESS: *I understand.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Although I have the utmost respect for you and for what you have accomplished.

MR. WALDMAN: I am going to ask some general questions on international humanitarian law and some of this, My Lord, we have gone over, so I am not going to go into as much detail.

HIS LORDSHIP: You go ahead as much as you want, Mr. Waldman. I have no problem.

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. I think we are all getting used to the terms by the third day. But, then I am going to hope that we can focus a bit more directly on the situation in Sri Lanka. We will start off with self-determination and perhaps you can explain to us...we have already heard the views of Professor Paust and Professor Quigley and Professor Boyle.

HIS LORDSHIP: Oh, were you in the courtroom?

MR. WALDMAN: No, she was not.

THE WITNESS: *No.*

MR. WALDMAN: She just arrived last night.

HIS LORDSHIP: So then, how did she hear the views of

MR. WALDMAN: No, we have. I said "we have.'

HIS LORDSHIP: Oh, we have, sorry. Okay.

THE WITNESS: *I am familiar with the work of these three, however, and I am honoured to be also before this Court in the same proceedings where they have appeared.*

MR. WALDMAN: I said "we have." She hadn't, unfortunately.

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes, I understand.

BY MR. WALDMAN:

Q. But, in any event, with respect to the question of self-determination, could you perhaps give us a brief analysis of how it arises and what are the...the basis upon which a people... perhaps we could start off by talking about peoples and when a people has the right to selfdetermination, in your view, as a first step?

A. *I think I would like to start with the United Nations Charter. because it is in fact the Charter of the United Nations that brings the word "selfdetermination" into twentieth century international law in human rights. The Charter language, however, is quite bald. It just simply says that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to, because of the principle of selfdetermination, the realization of the right of selfdetermination of peoples.*

Through a series of United Nations resolutions and then the promulgations of several major human rights treaties, the principle of selfdetermination took a bit more firmer ground, including a bit more definition and including some other documents that when signed and ratified became binding. Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights restate the principle of selfdetermination. Its location, the principle of selfdetermination located in Article I of both of those covenants was viewed as extremely significant and important to underline the value of that right in the overall international regime. It could have been down as Article 14 or Article 15, Article 16. It, in fact, was Article I before there was any other article even discussing direct application of the treaties.

A language for that was worked out excruciatingly at the United Nations during tne sixties and while the covenants didn't come into effect until into the seventies, in fact into the eighties, the language was settled as at approximately 1966 in both covenants.

In 1970, at a kind of first breathing point and reflection in the United Nations system, the international community looked around and felt there needed to be some restatement or at least some understanding of how some of the principles in the United Nations Charter would operate. For instance, in the United Nations Charter, there was no definition of "aggression."

In the United Nations Charter there was no discussion what self-determination meant, only that it existed as a righ but what it means in operation was not set out. And the were a number of resolutions passed by the General Assemb in the era of the seventies which add a little understanding the bare bones of the principle of selfdetermination. And, the same time, there were also some processes of decoloniz tion going on and the particular evil of apartheid occurrin which presented an additional resolve to unfold the language of self determination.

The International Court of Justice in its opinion in the Western Sahara case in 1975 added a dimension of looking to pre-colonial disposition of a situation to determine the status of the people or peoples, depending on whether you were an "s" person with the word or not. Some people simply say "selfdetermination of people," others say "peoples," and think that there is a legal universe between "people" and "peoples." I disagree with that. I think either one is synonymous.

There was discussion of whether or not a post-colonial disposition of a colonial territory, failing to take into consideration the pre-colonial history, could extinguish the right to self determination of and by itself.

Q. Explain that?

A. *Okay. In many instances, the colonial powers created one state out of what had been historically separate. In the devolution process, in the decolonization process, the colonial power wanted to know to whom to give authority of state.*

The Spanish wisely sought the guidance of the International Court of Justice when both Mauritania and Morocco attempted to seize what had been under the Spanish colonial empire Spanish Sahara. Spain wanted to know, who do we give the flag to? Who do we give power to? Who do we hand it over to? The International Court of Justice in that opinion said that neither Morocco nor Mauritania had a pre-colonial right to that area; therefore, Spain was justified in turning it over to neither one and turning over power to the actual residents or people who are called the Saharans, who call themselves the Saharans, who identify as Saharans, saying, "We are a distinct people. We are not Moroccan. We ar not Mauritanian." The difficulty in that situation, of course is that Morocco has seized and has, to this day, not yet withdrawn in spite of United Nations orders to do so and carr out a plebiscite.

In some situations, the colonial power simply handed over to one who promised...who promised that we will mak sure that both sides or three sides or four sides, howeve many sides there were, have a chance to approve. Such wa the case in Burma, for instance, when, in turning over powe to the Burmese who were the predominant group in what th British called Burma were not the only group there, some whom had never ceded sovereignty to the Burmese nor to th British.

As a typical formula in the decolonization process, the Constitution of Burma, at that time, said that these groups who were not Burmese would have a right to decide in ten years whether they wanted to continue or whether they would go their separate ways. When ten years were up, they weren't given the option and some of them were saying, "Hey, we want our option and we decline to continue as part of Burma," and that is fundamentally what is behind the current situation in Burma.

There was a similar situation in Sri Lanka, at that time, when there was supposedly some agreements that the colonial power in turning over to the Sinhala political figures, it was with the understanding that the Tamil would have an active participation in the country and it wouldn't be a Sinhala country; it would be truly a country of both where the issues of peopleness would not be part of the political process.

In the decolonization process in the Kashmir question, both sides, both Pakistan and India, made a promise to the United Nations that the Kashmiri people would have an opportunity to approve their accession to one or the other or to neither. The United Nations agreed, passed a resolution to that effect; it has yet to be carried out.

Because of some of these situations in the decolonization process, the meaning of the concept of self-determination evolved with the intransigency in some of the situations that it evolved faster. In some situations, the position of one or another group that in the pre-colonial period had been independent deteriorated dramatically. In some instances, the United Nations chose to intervene; in some instances, the United Nations did not.

In the 1980's, the situation around the world was relatively bad and the subcommission authorized several studies on selfdetermination. The Critescu study and the Gros Espiell study which I have cited in my materials, both of those were an attempt to bring some of these situations into the 1980's reality in how poorly the decolonization process was working around the world and to reinvoke the principle of self-determination and with more understanding so that the international community would know better how to act.

Q. Okay. Well...

A. We could go on.

HIS LORDSHIP: I was about to say you probably can go on for much, much more. But, I think for our purposes, I have heard enough

BY_MR WALDMAN:

Q. Perhaps then you could summarize your understanding of customary international law and international law as it stands today as to when...well, first of all, let us start at the beginning. How would you define "people'? I think as a result of a question that arose yesterday, My Lord, perhaps it might be helpful for this witness to distinguish between a people and a minority in a...

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, I think you asked her how to define "people." Why don't we let her define it, as best she can, and then you may go on, if you think it is necessary?

BY_MR WALDMAN:

Q. Could you please define for us what your understanding under international law is about "people" or "peoples," however it is?

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, we have agreed for purposes that it is synonymous.

THE WITNESS: *For me it is. For others there is a universe of difference.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes. But, it is you who is tesfifying.

THE WITNESS: *From the point of view of the principle of selfdeterrnination, a people is a group that with a common history...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Not too quickly, please.

THE WITNESS: *..common ethnicity, though that is not the major factor, common language, common culture, and an historic relationship to specific territory; and being a people, in that sense, means that there is a right to complete independence.*

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. If they choose that route?

A. *If they choose that route. They have a right. The main right under the principle of self-deterrnination of a people is the right to decide their own political situation.*

Q. Let us go through some...I think common history is pretty clear; language, ethnicity...the one that causes...

A. *As I say, ethnicity isn't a major factor, but it can enter in.*

Q. I think the one that causes a... when you say an historic relationship to a specific territory, there are two issues there. "Historic," what do you mean by that and then "specific territory"? Can you help us define what it means to be a specific territory?

A. *This is where the question of minority becomes very critical, because tbere have been arguments against applying tbe principle of selfdetermination to people who legitimately have a right to it. Because other states are afraid, does that mean that I have to give half of Chicago to the Polish Americans? Does that mean I have to give all of Louisiana to African-Americans, because they are the majority and that is where they have been?*

When we talk about the concept of self determination, you have to exclude the notion of immigration in an immigrant country, unless you want to go back thousands of years which in fact in the Sri Lankan situation you usually go back to.

HIS LORDSHIP: I am sorry. Now, you must exclude the notion of immigration?

THE WITNESS: *Right. In other words, immigrants arising.. coming into an area recently that may occupy a lot of the territory don't have the right of selfdetermination to that tem-*

tory.

HIS LORDSHIP: No, but their future generations do?

THE WITNESS: *So, they may become a minority.*

HIS LORDSHIP: But, their future generations do, according to your definition?

By MR. WALDMAN:

Q. That is what...

A. *Well, maybe or maybe not, but it would be thousands of years or at least many, many hundreds. For instance, it has not been viewed and I agree with the view that the Sikh population in the Punjab have the right to self-determination. I disagree that they have the right to selfdetermination. They are...some of them may have moved in there or changed their religion 400 years ago, but in the normal course of events in the concept of self-determination, that wouldn't necessarily ripen into a right to sovereignty. A minority...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, you may have a problem with that. There are others who...

THE WITNESS: *There are others who disagree with me, I agree with you, Your Honour.*

HIS LORDSHIP: But, it is your view, as an example only, that the Sikhs in the Punjab, and we are using that only as an example now, would not be entitled to sovereignty? That is your view?

THE WITNESS: *That is my view.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Okay. Because they are not...they are a people, but without a historic relationship to a specific territory; is that what you said?

BY MR. WALDMAN:

Q. That is the basic...

A. *Well, I am not sure that I would define them...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Even as a people?

THE WITNESS: *...as a people, in that sense, either.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Oh, okay. well then, we will have to come back to that.

BY MR. WALDMAN:

Q. But, at least in terms of the question I asked you, it is your view that because they have only been there for 400 years, they don't have a sufficiently historical relationship to the territory to qualify as a people?

HIS LORDSHIP: No, but she also said they are not a people.

BY MR. WALDMAN:

Q. So, in terms of the...

A. *The Karen, for instance, in Burma, have been in that area...probably they migrated in about 10 B.C. 20 B C., no one is sure, exactly. They have been there ever since. The Tamil in Sri Lanka, Kashmiris in Kashmir, they have been in that same place for what we sometimes says time immemorial. Well, sometimes we can pierce the veil of time immemorial and actually pinpoint somewhat. But, we are not talking about migration in the last hundred years. In those situations, people, even if of all one group, would be viewed as minorities.*

Now, one of the difficulties with defining selfdetermination is that even in the U.N. system there has been great reluctance to define it too carefully, because many states sitting on people having the right to self-determination don't want a clear understanding of the principle of selfdetermination because they don't want to tip the diplomatic scale, and many governments are sitting on people's rights and maintaining it because of maintaining a diplomatic posture. A government in question, the government of China over Tibet.

China marched in in 1949, I think in our lifetime, and we remember I remember. I am old enough to remember, but...

Q. But, the Tibetans are a people?

A. *...all in a kind of diplomatic grasp of the situation since the current China has been seated in 1972. So, even in spite of U.N. language on the Tibet situation on the right to selfdetermination, politically it is capped. Raising the issue of selfdetermination in the United Nations is relatively troubling to many states and can be even professionally dangerous because you are viewed as a bad guy. For instance, I am sure I am viewed as a bad guy by the government of China because I talk about self-determination in terms of Tibet. So, it is politically loaded.*

Because of that, even in the reports in 1980 with Critescu and Gros Espiell, Gros Espiell, I have talked to personally, the pressure on keeping certain concepts at least a little bit vague was excruciating, and Mr. Jules Desche^ nes, an outstanding Canadian jurist, who was charged by the Subcommission on Human Rights to define ''minorities" was equally pressured to make sure his definition of "minority" would not be so narrow as to exclude groups with a legitimate right to self-determination. In other words, the pressure on him was to have a definition of "minority" that would subsume in the self-determination side. Therefore, governments such as China would rest easily because the Tibetans could be defended as minorities using the Desche^ nes definition. He refused.

Q. But, your...

A. *He refused. But, it shows...I am explaining it this way because it is extremely hard to narrow down into one precise definition both the concept of self-determination and peoples and cite to it in a black letter law document because of the politics involved. My definition is my definition, I stand on it as an expert and in talking with many others in the field, that is my understanding of what everybody knows it is, but fmding it in black letter print is very difficult because of extreme politics.*

HIS LORDSHIP: I am sorry, ma'am. "That everybody knows what it is"? If I were to suggest to you that it is possible that other persons may think otherwise. It means not everybody knows what it is...

THE WITNESS: *Well, I am talking about in the field..*

HIS LORDSHIP: ...in the sense that you know what it...

THE WITNESS: *...in the field of human rights with* *human rights attorneys...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Oh, all right.

THE WITNESS: *...people in the U.N. forum, some of the governments in question, the special rapporteurs who wrote the main documents on self-determination, the scholars in the field, there is near unanimity. I really...in the definitions and the discussion I just gave, you could find it in a lot of the scholarly works on it, but whether you could find it in what you call a black letter law document is a question.*

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. But, let us try...because you have used two concepts. A people has the right to selfdetermination, and you have described a people.

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, I don't know. How did she describe a people?

MR. WALDMAN: She described people, the concept of people. She said it was a group that have common history, language, ethnicity, common culture and an historic relationship to a specific temtory. That was her definition of people.

HIS LORDSHIP: But, except that she went on to explain...all right, go ahead.

BY MR. WALDMAN:

Q. And then I asked her...you know, she went on to explain about the aspect of historic relationship to a specific territory. I think that is what you were just doing. So, that is your definition of people. Now...

HIS LORDSHIP: But, she also gave...and please forgive me, but I can't just go on with it.

MR. WALDMAN: No, no, no...

HIS LORDSHIP: She also gave specific examples of what she says are not peoples.

MR. WALDMAN: Yes, exactly.

HIS LORDSHIP: Okay, go ahead

MR. WALDMAN: The Sikhs are not peoples. The Burmese. . . .

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, whatever. Go ahead.

MR. WALDMAN: and the Tibetans, in her opinion. The Burmese and the Tibetans

HIS LORDSHIP: Everything that she is giving now is her opinion.

BY_MR WALDMAN:

Q. Right. The Tibetans and the Burmese are and the Tamils are. Now, you used the concept "minority" and perhaps you could explain to us. So, peoples have a right to self-determination. Do minorities have a right to self-determination?

A. *They do not.*

Q. Now, what distinguishes a minority from a people?

A. *For the most part, it is that historic link to land and a pre-colonial self-rule.*

Q. So, peoples have that; minorities do not?

HIS LORDSHIP: You have to say a word, because it is impossible for the court reporter to take down that she is shaking her head.

By_MR WALDMAN:

Q. Do you say "Yes"?

A. *Yes.*

Q. I think you talked a bit about it, but I would like you to perhaps explain: What are the international authorities you rely on to make the distinction between a people and a minority? You mentioned Justice Desche^ nes' work?

A. *Justice Desche^ nes' work, the work of the subcommission rapporteurs on self-determination, looking through the records of the United Nations from 1948 forward, looking at the development of the concept, in other words, a travaux pre' paratoire, to the covenants, the discussion on self-determination in those, watching the principle of selfdetermination under the agenda item in the Commission on Human Rights year after year, and basic elements in that that arise in the course of the debates, meeting with other scholars and discussing at great length perceptions of selfdetermination, reading scholarly works not authorized by the United Nations but incorporated and cited in the United Nations.*

Q. So, minorities do not have rignts to selfdetermination?

A. *No.*

Q. But, peoples do? Now, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, in your opinion, based upon your knowledge and your studies, are they a people?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Can you explain to me what is the basis for your conclusion that the Tamils in Sri Lanka are a people?

A. *I think there is no dispute that historically Tamils were present on the island of Ceylon as long ago as 2,000 years ago, perhaps longer. The Tamil culture was distinct from the Sinhala culture also on the same island. The Tamil culture was primarily Hindu, has been primarily Hindu, a language considerably different from the Sinhala language. The Tamil kingdom, as it sometimes is called, existed as a relatively independent...totally independent country. There were some skirmishes between the Sinhala kingdom and the Tamil kingdom, but there were not long periods of one dominating over the other. For the most part in the 2,000-year history, they more or less maintained their own areas. During the colonial administration, however, the British created what is called unitary rule and...*

Q. When did the British arrive in Sri Lanka?

❑❑❑

(To continue in the next issue)

T.R.O. raises funds through marathon

Thirty five Tamils will be participating in the London Marathon to be held on 26 April and will raise funds for the disabled in Tamil Eelam.

It will be remembered that last year ten Tamils took part in the annual London marathon and collected £6,820 which money was sent to start primary schools for displaced children in the Vanni, Mullaitivu, Vakarai areas.

The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (T.R.O.) has now appealed to all concerned to offer whatever encouragement to the 35 Tamils taking part this year. This year's collection will be used to alleviate the sufferings of the young and old who are disabled in Tamil Eelam.

Further details could be obtained from Selva Kugan on (0181) 520 5876, or (0181) 531 9104, or 0385 934 736.

Obituaries

Mrs.Mabel Thevathasan

Born: 17 April 1914
Died: 7 March 1998

Daughter of Rev. Rice, wife of Rex Thevathasan, one time Irrigation Engineer, Colombo, mother of late Samuel Thevathasan, Shanthi Manikkavasagam, Ananda Thevathasan and Jeeva Thevathasan and grandmother of Dr.Lionel Thevathasan, Sureshana and Nishan. Mrs.Mabel Thevathasan was an old girl of Chundikuli Girls's School, Jaffna.

25, Moffat Road, Tooting, London SW17. (Sent by Ananda Thevathasan, Tel:0181- 673 3529)

* * *

T.Neethirajah

The death occurred in Colombo on 12 March of Thambimuttu Neethirajah of Kokuvil West, Jaffna. Mr.Neethirajah was a well-known businessman in Colombo, a Justice of Peace, a Senator at one time and a member of the Colombo Municipal Council. He was proprietor of Greenlands Hotel, Bambalapitiya. He was 77 at the time of death. Cremation took place on 14 March.

89, New Chetty Street, Kotahena, Colombo.

* * *

Charles Abeysekera

Charles Abeysekera's contribution to the cause of human rights in Sri Lanka is immeasurable. His death comes at a time when the Sri Lankan government is bent on continuing the war and violating freedoms of expression and association, states the Tamil Information Centre, London, in a Press release.

Charles Abeysekera who was a champion of human rights for several decades, was a founder-member of human rights agencies such as the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality (MIRJE) , INFORM, Movement for the Defence of Democratic Rights and the Campaign for Peace with Democracy.

* * *

Remembering
Gamini Navaratne

Gamini Navaratne who passed away recently was a journalist who had a long stint in the Colombo newspaper world. Starting life in the sub-editorial staff of the *Times of Ceylon*, he became Chief Sub-Editor of *THE SUN* and later occupied the same position in the tabloid *Ceylon Daily Mirror*, all three papers now extinct. But Gamini will be best remembered for his association with the Jaffna-based weekly, the *Saturday Review*, of which I was the founding editor. He was the paper's political correspondent in Colombo from the very inception, and later took on the mantle of editorship, during the paper's second phase of life beginning February 1984. That was when the Jayewardene government lifted the ban on the paper, but permitted. republication under strict conditions of censorship. I was then safely away from the clutches of the Sri Lankan government, having fled to India in September 1983, following the C.I.D's "invitation" to me to report at Colombo's dreaded 4th Floor. (How having eluded' the long arm of one government, I fell foul of another is of course another story altogether)

The *Saturday Review* was born in January 1982, motivated by the need for an English publication, to articulate 'Tamil grievances, following the burning of the Jaffna Public Library the previous year; a dastardly act that wounded Tamil sentiment deeply. The Jayewardene government did not take to the paper kindly, and it was a case of living from week to week, ever waiting for the axe to fall anytime. It was under such circumstances that Gamini Navaratne, a Sinhala Buddhist, chose to work for the paper while living in the inimically communal environment in Colombo. Gamini's association with Jaffna and the *Saturday Review* could best be expressed in his own words. Writing in a reminiscent vein in a special issue of *Saturday Review* that he brought out (26 January 1985), to commemorate the third birthday of SR, he said:

"When it was proposed to launch the *Saturday Review*, I told Mr.S.Sivanayagam, its first Editor - my colleague in the *Daily Mirror* in 1964 and a good friend ever since - that I would give him all the help I could from Colombo. I wrote to him: "just because you are there, solely because you are there, I shall do everything possible to keep the *Saturday Review* going... because I respected him as a journalist, intrepid, innovative, and indefatigable. I added that any time he wanted my physical presence in Jaffna, I would come over and assist. But I did not bargain for a prolonged stay in Jaffna, which has been my predicament.

"I last met Mr.Sivanayagam in Sri Lanka on 1st July 1983. As I took his leave under the temple tree in front of the office, after enjoying his hospitality for a week, I said I feared that the days of the *Saturday Review* were numbered. There were plenty of persons in the Government who wanted the paper banned; it was becoming a damned nuisance for them. I had just reached my hotel and begun packing my bags when he telephoned to say that my worst fears had been proved correct. By Emergency regulations, the *Saturday Review* office had been sealed .....

"Looking back, it should make us wonder how a Sinhalese, a Buddhist moreover, came to have the unique distinction of being invited to edit a paper which had already earned notoriety in many Sinhala eyes as a "Tiger paper" and "Eelam paper" within its 11/2 year existence. It was after all the immediate post-1983 period in the island's history when there was a total breakdown of trust between the Tamil and Sinhala peoples. That was therefore an act that called for, confidence, courage and trust on both sides. To lift himself from his own physical and mental environment that was seething with hostility against the Tamils, compounded by the animosity within the Colombo media world itself in which he functioned, and to accept that position, living as the solitary Sinhala civilian in a militarised zone and without a sense, of alienation - that was Gamini's greatest triumph.

Gamini was a bachelor; a loner in many ways too. To me, it is a matter of personal regret that during the later years, we lost our relationship somewhere down the way.

S.Sivanayagam

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REQUIEM FOR A DIVIDED ISLAND

BY.K.KANAVATHIPILLAI

(K.KANAVATHIPILLAI IS A FORMER ASST. UNDER SECRETARY OF THE(IBRD)

Sri Lanka - Taprobane of the Greeks, Serendib of the Arabs, Ceylon of the Europeans, advertised by the natives as an earthly paradise is now an ethnic tinderbox. The British rule of the entire island, which began in 1815 ended on 4 February 1948. The power transfer made the Sinhalese sole custodians of legislative and executive authority. The Tamils ever since are marginalised and are marked for annihilation and eventual assimilation. Countries like individuals paint their own future. The picture of Sri Lanka since the grant of Sinhala independence is one of strife and disharmony.

Sri Lanka is a political basket case. Misreading of history has long been a favourite exercise of Sinhala politicians. The idea of a nation state covering the geographical entity of the island is a cherished dream of Sinhala leaders but shared by none other in this country. 50 years of so-called democracy culminating in the Golden Anniversary celebration of this year have only produced impressive examples of brutal murders, anti-Tamil riots and pogroms. The Tamil is not safe even in the prison cell. The Sinhala hatred of the Tamil minority tends towards genocide. The dark and murderous potential is present in the Sinhala polity arising out of an irreconcilable claim on Tamil land and political power.

A malnourished Tamil child in Mankul
(photo:U.S Committe for Refugees)

If the two races are to meet on terms of social equality it must be the result of a mutual appreciation. This mutual appreciation. This mutual appreciation is significantly absent in this country. The Sinhalese love to dominate in the belief that the island is his inheritance and that the minorities must do his bidding for their survival. The Tamils on the other hand price their independence, self-respect and love of homeland more than life itself.

The Sri Lankan armed forces are racist organisations composed of and led by the Sinhalese the forces inclusive of the police are " selected, trained and commissioned to be anti-Tamil combatants". They are the architects and the agents of war who strike fatal horror into the hearts and minds of the Tamil people. The common soldiers and policemen of this country are doing the everyday work of the Holocaust under the expert guidance of Sinhala political leaders and Buddhist prelates.

Anthony Spaeth writing in the *Time* of 11 August 1997 says "In Sri Lanka... a British style democracy went rotten when politicians from the majority Sinhalese community fanned animosities against the minority Tamils to get votes. A Tamil insurgency has raged for 14 years, claiming at least 60 000 lives. Its demand : a partition of Sri Lanka".

Tim Mc Girk writing in the *Sunday Review (The Independent on Sunday.)* of 26 February 1995 says " Since 1991 800 000 Tamils living in the Jaffna peninsula have been regularly strafed by Sri Lankan warplanes and hammered by artillery and naval bombardments. More than 30 000 families - men, women and children have perished in this 12 year civil war".

Not content with the military assault the Government is using food and medicine as weapons in its war against the Tamil people. The Tamils of the North-East face large scale deprivation and hunger. They are deliberately excluded from poverty alleviation schemes. Their freedom of movement is curtailed, they cannot reach areas where foodstuffs are available. The labouring classes have no employment. Over 75% of the people are living below the poverty line. Malnutrition is rife. Due to the pattern of poverty and neglect infant deaths are occurring with tragic regularity. The malnourished, disease stricken Tamil child is the symbol of the military grip on food and medicine.

The NGOs have been effectively prevented from carrying out any meaningful programmes to reduce the distress of the Tamil people. The government does not want the world to witness the shame of it. Its Minister of Foreign Affairs is ever-active in obstructing the flow of humanitarian assistance to the Tamil people.

The conquest of Jaffna has worsened the fate of the Tamil man. While civilians returning to their homes is natural, the quality of life they are facing needs scrutiny. Disappearances, extra-judicial killings, harassment at check-points, detention in military camps persist with higher intensity.

Rehabilitation has not been carried out with integrity. Corruption is rampant in the resettlement process. The military has forced people into areas where the landmine menace is at its highest. One has to visit Jaffna to understand the feeling of alienation felt by the returnees. The state of the bombed out buildings, the military domination, the rapacious Tamil militant groups, the terminally ill Jaffna Teaching Hospital, the disease and despicable levels of hygiene, the lack of a civil administration are parts of our composite agony.

> *"Disappearances, extra-judicial killings, harassment at check points, detention in military camps...."*

Responding to the harsh indictment of the Amnesty international over rape and disappearance in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Baticaloa the Ministry of Defence has appointed a Board of Investigation consisting of serving military officers. This is a sham exercise which deceives no one. The fact remains that the Tamil people are stripped bare of their human and fundamental rights.

Disappearances have been encouraged by the laws enacted by the laws enacted by the Sinhala legislature. Emergency Regulation No.17 enables the arrest and incarceration of people who have not yet nor ever committed an offence, indefinitely without trial. The Prevention of Terrorism Act sanctions military and police killings and denies the process of judicial inquires in all cases of death at the hands of the armed forces.

The Sri Lankan Government has refused to ratify the Optional Protocol on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that permits Victims to appeal to the UN Human Right Commission. The law to dispose of bodies without judicial inquiry which was withdrawn by the UNP Government in 1991 has been brought back by the Chandrika Government. The Human Rights Task Force, the only centralised body empowered to probe prolonged detention and other abuses never opened an office in Jaffna due to the intransigence of the Government.

To what lengths the PA Government will go to deceive the world at large is best illustrated by the Thai Pongal Day opening of a library in Jaffna. The Jaffna YMCA complex situated in Chundikuli is now under army occupation. The Jaffna Municipal Council had a library branch in the same building. On the insistence of the army the books were transferred to the buildings of the Dept of National Housing which is close by. Two Cabinet Ministers, the Army commander Lt.Gen,Daluwatte, the British High Commissioner Tatham attended the opening ceremony, under the cloak of maximum security.

Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in its running Commentary claimed that gaily clad people came to the opening ceremony in their thousands. But the fact remains that even a lackey of the Government like EPDP leader Douglas Devananda was body-searched twice before he was allowed to enter the premises. The local Government elections orchestrated by the army is another conjuring trick designed to show that normalcy has returned to the North. It may provide a convenient excuse for the Western Government to deport the Tamil refugees in their midst back to Sri Lanka.

Now for the late news. The Hartley College Library which the late Athulathmudali took particular care to destroy along with Science Lab is now under army occupation. The presence of the foreign troops disrupts the day to day operation of this institution.

Events now prove that Chandrika's devolution package will not see the light of day. It is another illusion to believe that the political solution now envisaged will end the war and release resources for other uses. The only solution that Chandrika ever had is military. For this end she staged the Jaffna talks to buy time for military preparation. Her claim that she will end what her father began speaks for itself. The LTTE's decision to resume military action on 19.04.1995 is fully vindicated by the dishonesty of the Chandrika Government.

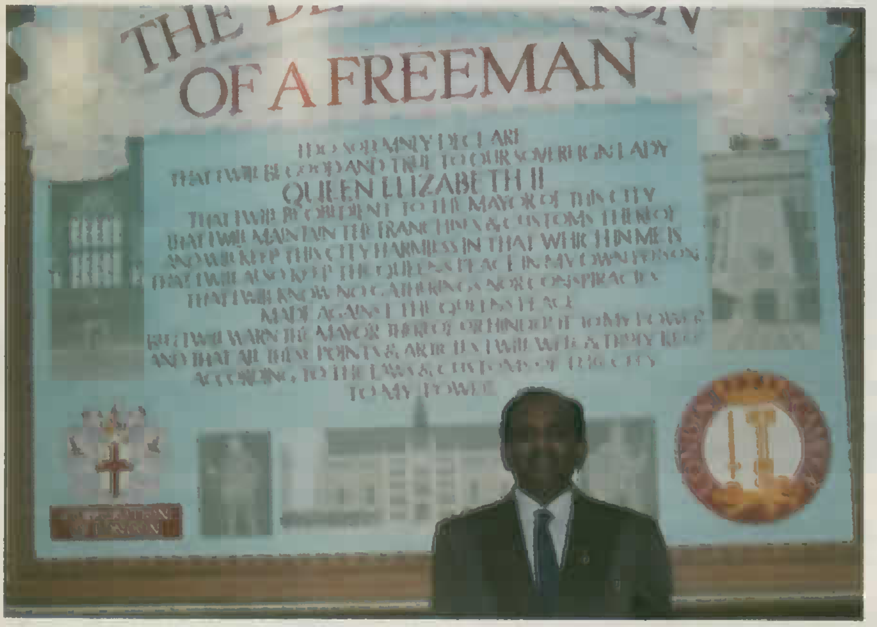
Only the collaborating Tamil parties of Colombo now believe that the Government has a credible conflict resolution proposal which could justify the war for Peace formula. The Government does not have or rather it never had any intention of resolving the conflict peacefully. Its aim is to destroy the Tamil struggle for independence militarily. The only stumbling block however is the might of the LTTE.

The ground position is the LTTE is the only organisation representing the Tamil people with the capacity to defend and save the Tamil People from the onslaught of the Sinhala Military. The LTTE is the only line of defence available to the Tamil people. The war against the Tamil people will collapse due to the fact that the LTTE and the Tamil people are one and inseparable. the BIRTH OF THAMIL EELAM IS AN ABSOLUTE CERTAINITY.

❑ ❑ ❑

Top London award for Eelam Tamil doctor

Dr.Namasivayam Sathiyamoorthy (Dr.N.S.Moorthy), an Eelam Tamil doctor, practising medicine in London is the recipient of a rare honour - the FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF LONDON. The FREEMAN award has been bestowed on him for his tireless work with complementary medicine and service in the community. His expertise in alternative medicine has won recognition among westerners, including Prince Charles, and has been noticed in British newspapers such as the DAILY MAIL and DAILY TELEGRAPH. The importance of the honour becomes evident when one looks at past recipients -Nelson Mandela, Jawaharlal Nehru, Princess Diana, and more recently German Chancellor Helmut Kohl !



It is not widely known that before Dr.Moorthy came to U.K. in 1989, he had been looking after the needs of one lakh and twenty thousand Eelam Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu camps for four years under the aegis of Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (T.R.O.) He was also instrumental in getting Medicines Sans Frontiers to work in war-torn Tamil Eelam areas. The honour given to him therefore is a matter of pride to the entire Eelam community, particularly because his commitment to the Tamil cause had earned him the wrath of the Sri Lankan government in earlier years. Where Sri Lanka dishonoured him, the City of London has honoured him.

Dr.Moorthy is married, and has two children.

Dr.S.A.Tharmalingam, 90th Birthday Felicitation

Dr.S.A.Tharmalingam, a long-standing Tamil Eelam activist, one time Mayor of Jaffna and later President of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TELF), and who was incarcerated by an oppressive Sri Lankan government at Welikade jail completed his 90th birthday on March 23, 1998.

A grateful Tamil Eelam public will felicitate him at a function on Sunday 19 April at Trinity Community Centre, East Avenue Manor Park, Eastham, followed by dinner.

Dr.Tharmalingam will be presented with a volume of tributes on that occassion.

Those who wish to participate at the function are requested to contact either *I.T.Sampanthan (0956 657 852) or C.Ranganathan (0181 647 7703).*

A Tamil school in Hounslow, U.K.

Feeling the need to have a school for Tamil children in the area to learn their language as well as to identify themselves with their culture, the Tamil community in Hounslow have started a school named "Thamil Kalvi Koodam".

Besides language teaching, the school will have a wider curriculum of studies. This will include music, both vocal and instrumental, such as veena, violin, miridangam, as well as dancing. Religious studies will also be conducted.

A musical programme (picture above) marked the launching of the school.

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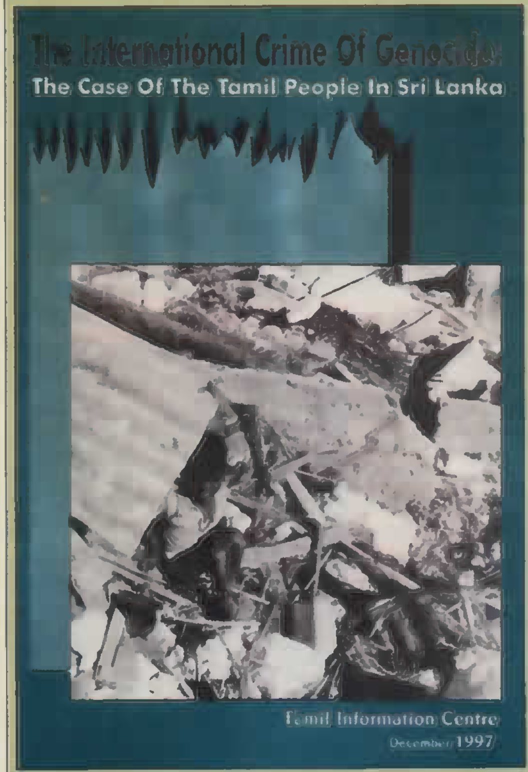
GENOCIDE: THE SRI LANKAN SITUATION



The International Crime Of Genocide
The Case Of The Tamil People In Sri Lanka
Tamil Information Centre
December 1997

A recent worthy addition to the literature on the ongoing tragedy in Sri Lanka is the 76-page monograph published by the Tamil Information Centre, London, under the title - THE INTERNATIONAL CRIME OF GENOCIDE: THE CASE OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE IN SRI LANKA.

Painstakingly researched by a German citizen, LUTZ OETTE, an LL.M. of the University College of London, the monograph covers the subject under various heads - The Definition of Genocide, the Genocidal Process, Acts of Genocide in Sri Lanka, Enforcement of the Genocide Convention, and Recommended Strategies for Preventing Future Genocide.

The arms trade, says the report, contributes to the perpetuation of the conflict, thereby providing the means for the commission of acts of genocide in the future course of the war. "This kind of trade also fails to offer any meaningful solution to the continuing conflict as the concerned governments fail to use the arms trade as a leverage to demand compliance with international human rights standards. Permitting arms trade to Sri Lanka does accordingly amount to a breach of Article 1 for states that are parties to the Genocide Convention", says the author.

Interspersed with visuals in black and white, and relevant quotes from a wide variety of sources, the publication is compulsory reading to all Sri Lanka watchers, researchers, governmental agencies, NGOs, and anyone who seeks understanding on the travails of a people in one corner of the world, bearing the brunt of the longest internal war in contemporary history.

Details of the book could be had from Tamil Information Centre, Thamil House, 720 Romford Road, London E12 6BT, UK. Telephone: + 44 (0) 181 514 6390. Fax: +44 (0) 181 514 0164. E-mail: 101560.3704@COMPUSERVE. COM.

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Conference in Denmark

On the 7th March 1998, the city of Copenhagen Saw an international conference on the Right of self-determination of the Tamils. The conference was sponsored jointly by the Dansk Sammenslutning of Tamilshe Foreninger (the Danish Federation of Tamil Associations and the International Federation of Tamils headquartered in London.

INTERNATIONAL KONFERENCE
DENMARK 07.03.98
THE RIGHT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE TAMILS

Over 130 persons participated, among them were many associations and organisations interested in co operation with the Danish Federation of Tamil Associations. Also present were quite a few Danish members of parliament who took an active part in the concluding debate and promised to take into consideration the message from the conference, in their work in the Government.

The inauguration speech was delivered by Anker Jorgensen- former prime minister- who displayed a firm grasp and knowledge of the situation faced by the Eelam Tamils of North and East of Sri Lanka His speech was followed by a reading from Hans Christian Anderson by the actress Gnita Norby from the Royal Theatre The welcome speech was delivered by Dorrit Bruselius- secretary of the Danish Federation of Tamil Associations A message from Mr Poul Nyrup Rasmussen- the current prime minister- was received, in which he extended his support for a peaceful solution of the conflict Lanka.

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The main issue that concerned the conference were the serious violations of Human Rights of the Tamil people involving rapes, torture, bombings, disappearances and imprisonment without trial The Amnesty International Report of 1997 was used as a starting point.

The conference urged the Government of Denmark to call upon the Sri Lankan Government to

Recognise the right of the Eelam Tamil people to self-determination

Cease all military operations against the Eelam Tamil people

Withdraw Sinhala occupation forces from the Tamil homeland

Lift the ban on the LTTE and enter into political negotiations with them.

Lift the economic embargo on the Tamil homeland

Allow free access to the war zone, in the Tamil homeland, to the international news media.

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